

COLLEGE ENGLISH

VOLUME 19

MARCH 1988

NUMBER 1

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For Contributors

Subjects and Expression: Anything that may interest teachers of literature and writing is potentially acceptable, including verse and fiction on academic subjects. A clear and lively style will of course recommend itself and its subject to the largest number of readers. **Styling of Manuscripts:** Please follow the MLA Style Sheet (Revised Edition) in all respects. Incorporate footnotes in the text except when it is absolutely impossible to do so. Keep block quotations short. Avoid tables, graphs, and other art-work. **Length of Manuscripts:** The shorter, the more likely of

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For Readers

With so many poets teaching English in colleges today, it is reassuring to see so many college English teachers writing poetry. This issue, emphasizing verse by poet-teachers and teacher-poets, is dedicated to the prototype, Robert Frost, who will be 84 this month, and who has never seen anything incompatible between poetry and teaching. The lead poem, about Mr. Frost, is by John Holmes, assoc. prof. at Tufts and author of five books of verse. John E. Bellamy is asst. prof. at Oregon College of Education; he has published poems in *Prairie Schooner*. W. Arthur Boggs is assoc. prof. at Portland State. Harry M. Brown, asst. prof. at Louisiana Tech, published *Sea Rock and Coral* (1950). Kenneth E. Eble, instr. at Utah, has printed four critical articles. W. L. Garner, co-author of *Reading Factual Prose* (1955), is instr. at S.U. Iowa. George Garrett, instr. at Wesleyan, has just published *King of the Mountain* (short stories) and *The Reverend Ghost* (poems). Walker Gibson, author of *The Reckless Spenders* (1954), has a second book of verse due out this year; an assoc. prof., he directs freshman English at NYU. Sidney L. Gulick, prof. at San Diego State, usually publishes scholarly articles. Robert Hogan, instr. at Ohio, will have an article on Lawrence printed in *MFS*. Judson Jerome, chmn. at Antioch, has published much verse in good magazines since 1953. George A. Knox, now in Austria, is asst. prof. at Riverside. Bernard Lazar, chmn. at Keystone, writes, directs, and writes about plays. Marion Mont-

gomery, instr. at Georgia, has articles on Frost and Chaucer, short stories, and poems forthcoming in a half-dozen periodicals. William T. Moynihan, instr. at Connecticut, has four articles accepted for publication. William Van O'Connor, well-known critic, is prof. at Minnesota. Richard C. Pettigrew, prof. at Carson-Newman, has published a book of poems, *Green Persimmons* (1932), as well as numerous magazine pieces. Raymond Roseliep, asst. prof. at Loras, has printed poems in several magazines, including *CE*. Samuel J. Sackett is assoc. prof. at Fort Hays, Kansas State. William E. Stafford is assoc. prof. at Lewis and Clark. John Tagliabue, asst. prof. at Bates, has published many poems in *Poetry*, *VQR*, etc. William H. Van Voris, is instr. at Oregon. The proseurs: Wallace L. Anderson, assoc. prof. at Iowa State Teachers, took his degrees at Trinity and Chicago; he is the co-author of the textbook *Poetry as Experience* (1952), with Norman C. Stageberg. Sam Hynes has published a number of articles and edited Hulme's *Further Speculations* (1955); he is asst. prof. at Swarthmore. Edward Stone, chmn. and assoc. prof. at Ohio, took degrees at Texas and Duke. He is the editor of *Incident at Harper's Ferry* (1956) and the author of a dozen articles on American Literature. John M. Morris went to Hamilton, is instr. at Delaware, and has published verse in *Poetry*. Robert A. Hume, prof. at Nevada, took his degrees at Stanford and Cornell.

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COLLEGE ENGLISH

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Photograph of Robert Frost

JOHN HOLMES

The one with bark on the logwall back of him,
White shirt open, his hair combed with a hand.
Sun strikes the nose. The full lower lip closes
In shadow on the upper, and fine lines ray in
To the browed-over, half-lidded, shadowed eyes.
Or in as if to a mid-focal point, to one eye,
Steel if you could see it, like a rifle aimed.
It is at rest in its weight, ready to score.

His eyes are the only unseen part of the picture,
But the whole thing is only a picture of his eyes.
The deep-water men get slitted, light-blued eyes,
The thousand-league look, and fighter-pilots, and poets,
From staring further than eye is meant to. Or in.
Frost's eyes count the fixed rhythms of change
And the brief disguises of what most endures,
Fire and ice going in and out of fashion,
And, not tired, but amused at time's re-arrangements,
He sees earth's the right place for good footing.

Back of his shoulder, between him and the wall,
Is the tip of a tough old man-tall country weed
Called steeplebush in books about wildflowers;
By farmers, hardhack. He would be last to forget
Fact-name and symbol-name, two names for one thing
And hard to get rid of, as his poems will be.
Words are the mischief in him. One of his books
He proposed calling Hardhack, to alarm his publishers
Till the last minute. It came out Steeplebush.
But the other word's still there, sticking up
From back of his shoulder into this design,
This photograph of what's outside the frame.

His hunter's, fighter's, old-star gazer's eye
Looks out on a world no better than might be,
But no worse. He finds a middle breathing-space,
And between-times searches words, as lawyers do
A title, for limits, or as geographers
The further ranges, coastlines, last capes, poles,

And he remarks the dictionary limits him.
 It might, a little, but he makes old words new,
 Doubling the contents of it two for one.
 What might be under A is in Z. Or B.
 From metaphor's one face to another is as far
 As target from telescope, or the microscope's
 Nearer-than-near. The poet's eyes lines them up,
 Object and insight, in the wink of a word.

He has a word for everything, or for almost
 Everything. About refugees he said,
 I don't know what to do. I cry inside.
 And said it again, it makes me cry inside.

The darkness draws him, the dark woods of death,
 Of a sleep, of a giving up, of running away
 Into the loneliness he does not fear
 But never has been through and out beyond;
 The one thing he has not seen, but guesses at
 With words. My own desert places. Onset.
 Yet all the precedent is on his side,
 And the constant symbol will outlive him—birch—
 But any sample is constant to a revisionist.
 Things. He has taken a lifelong look at things
 Out of love and need, remembering them all
 With five senses and a sixth sense, words.
 What time does to a face it does to the mind,
 Wears away all but enough to cover bone.
 This picture is of wisdom, will, and the eyes.

The Return

GEORGE KNOX

Like young Stephen Dedalus
 Ez cut the tautumbulicus,
 In *Wanderjähren* forged a style
 While beating out the long exile.
 Unlike that Hero, Pound came home
 To St. Elizabeth's from Rome;
 And serially now he makes us wait
 For Cantos in the Grand Vulgate.
 Free in bondage, Miltownic hack,
 He prescribes the U. S. Epicac.

Four Elements of Dying for the Conservative University Sinner

ROBERT HOGAN

For Youths: As silver spurts out like a spear
At night in April by an idling car
And fumes of beer, perfume, and hair
Remind you what you were and what you are,
And if your boyish thoughts, once pure,
Think now of future wife and daughter,
Here, child, is where
You die by water.

For English Instructors and Other Intellectuals and Fops:
Comparing God with Paul Claudel,
Confusing Ellis Hall with Hell,
If Kafka, Kierkegaard, and Proust
Select your airy brain to roost,
If Yeats, Jane Austen, Walter Pater
Need comment now and reading later,
Here, friend, is where
You die by air.

For Plain Blunt Men—Department Heads and Members of
Committees:
Devout, intense, passionate men,
Never question the intent
Of the current argument.
When purpose lofty as a steeple
Resolves to words and not to people,
When fine thoughts threading thin
Question desire,
You die by fire.

Envoy: Fellow,
Callow
Virtue, Beauty, Worth
Die at last by earth.
I know only
Death is lonely.

Departure
Basil Pillard, 1895-1957

JUDSON JEROME

My errand was to drive him to the train.
He left (forgiving as the sun) the June
ignorant loves, extravagant greens, and rode
human by human with me in the car.
Words, our intriguing spiders, we held fondly
in distrust. Facts spoke: the train was simply there,

seething like a planet stopped in space,
his seat reserved, his briefcase full of such
preoccupying things a soul might want
at night, or when eternal countryside
made looking outward dull. The acrid air
of the depot made us hope that progress might

not be to be regretted, and urgency honked
around us in the street. That street I had
to traffic in, but he would touch it crossing
as one steps lightly on a stone, mindful
only of what he takes to be a shore.
What words for now? Those creatures squatted dark

and anxious in webs back in our brains. We smiled
assurance that when we were whirled away
we would remain as real as now, although
worlds spun us fast (the universe expands),
and I was fortunate to feel at last
his eyes engage mine like extended hands,

and this was wordless: nor speak of the felt truth,
nor the blast of vacancy in the train's wake,
nor the departure of the iron mechanical
indifferently bearing its burden, groaning its orbit,
nor its exhaustive pulse or wail, but there
feel firm engagement of eyes—across the air.

Matthew Arnold

GEORGE GARRETT

I think, after all, you were right.
The whole man is a man divided,
Adam and the glory of his wound,
doubled to beauty in a single night.

And how shall we live with ourselves?
Shall I follow my inner dancer
or assume the logician's poise of stone?
You, once expert to answer,

Smile across years and the changes
even the Critic never dreamed of,
let alone the Poet, a stiff Greek
gesturing for pity and for love.

But, troubled like the rest of us,
you found your voice and gave a name
to what you believed. If now
there's only smoke where there was flame,

if ancestral notions tumble down
and critics, having been deceived
too often, drop their pens and run,
there's still the strict example of your frown

to shame them back into the ranks.
Adam, torn in two, discovered,
strange and beautiful, another self
to live with. He gave thanks.

After Reading the Last Pages of *Moby-Dick*

JOHN TAGLIABUE

How calm and grave the world seems now that Ishmael is up again
And birds in the summer coolness sing after the death of all
And Ahab pouring down like fire and comet and King
In fury through the furled and unfurled watery grave
Spoke to the fish and Fedallah and climbing once more the foam
Spoke with the voice of the milder sea. Wonderer and wanderer
He broke the waves' Sun and his arm like an empire
Poured pearls into the caskets of death. Then the Sun
Once more came from the birds of the sea like a prophet, Son,
or Ishmael.

Exercise: Now Define Language

WALKER GIBSON

Of course all composition is admirable—
Reports from reporters, novels by novelists,
Paintings, programs, predictions of profits and losses,
And all fortunes told by tellers of fortunes.

But good composition, agreed, is better than bad?
Good composition tries to fit the facts
As you and I, in lawn chairs on the terrace,
Compose ourselves to talk of composition.

And when the facts (let's argue) when they're seen
As just one more composing that you make,
Just one more crazy act of fortune-telling,
One more mad novel, well, what then, Professor?

The five-year-old who ran to the swimming pool
This afternoon and dropped in over his head—
He came up (finally) and rubbed his eyes
And what he said was, Look, hey, I'm a swimmer!

For Any Living Hardy

RAYMOND ROSELIEP

Native, return this way, from mind's proud Wessex
to a world in jungleflower bloom.
(What President Immortal has beheld
a richer gloom?)

This way, where children pass unharmed. And see
an order kindled by an unseen hand.
Before the mind ensnare and crush, child, kneel
and understand

how gold melts to a point
and lines the orchid's shell,
how through an atom sky
suns vouch that all is well.

Soliloquy in English 3

(A bow, but no apologies, to R. B.)

W. L. GARNER

I

Arghhh—here come, my day's abhorrence!
 Ransack your damned briefcase muss!
 If lectures killed sophs, Doc Forense,
 Plato's blood, yours will blast us!
 What? those dog-eared notes want trimming?
 Spine-cracked text you'll raid again?
 Needs that blackboard full be brimming,
 Chalked with endings feminine?

II

While Lit's feast we taste, you blither
Form and structure. I must hear
 Logorrhea: style-and-myth-or-
 Genre-period-dull-career.
In Romantic poems, flatly,
We'll not always find romance;
You know what "romance" means, Fratly?
 Rue Pigalle in Paris, France.

III

Whew! We have our patter furnished,
 Spoke with care, so we, trained crows,
 Squawk back echoes—roughly burnished
 Gibberish that might pass for prose,
 Puffed with critics' apparatus
 (Wind to brain-inflate hog-hicks)
 Fatuous, second-hand afflatus—
 (Whoops! his metaphor got mixed!)

IV

Trained, forsooth! While bleached Dolores
 Postures in the first-row rank
 Mid pledge-soror's whispering chorus
 (Simpering all, to cover blank),
 Can't I see his four eyes glowing,
 Watching kewpie-dollish lips,
 Ogling cashmered curves full flowing,
 Tightly-skirted wiggling hips?

V

When we finish a selection,
 "Theme and quiz," he hymns always,

Lines them out for our dejection:
 Due in space of two whole days.
 We futility illustrate,
 Scanning mundane-abstract notes;
 In wee hours waxing frustrate,
 Parsing, splicing, jointless quotes.

VI

Gr-r-r, you pedant! If you're able
 We're to have a test, too? Nice!
 One to every student's table,
 Each to puzzle o'er a trice.
 How run still your questions? Essay?
 Not one 'A-sort shall we spy?
 Strange—and we, too, with such assay
 Swap right answers on the sly.

VII

There's a tough text of Lord Byron's,
 Once you come on it, exacts
 Twenty-four interpretations,
 Spawn of demi-critic hacks.
 New twenty-fifth I ought create,
 Crammed with Freud as it can be,
 Spin it fine and blurt it straight,
 Shocking prof, while girls tee-hee.

VIII

Take my soft-backed, drug-rack story,
 'Cite a passage blunt with sex,
 Claim it's modern allegory:
 New wine in old glass—*Oed. Rex*.
 If I double back the cover,
 Lurid pose might make him puke—
 He who's sure Lit's standards hover
 'Round sweet ladies from Dubuque.

IX

Semester end's impending soon;
 Pledge my soul to Satan's power
 For a C or higher boon:
 Sudden death to English Four—
And so we see now, that in Keats,
Metrics roll (Praise God, the bell!)
Quite straight along in even beats—
 Roll, you egghead, straight to Hell!

A Word for Mr. Wordsworth

WILLIAM STAFFORD

Going out to put a hand on the door frame
and gazing over the yard into rickrack hedges
and alfalfa fields, a person recollects childhood,
and holds what he sees; he holds this present
against equal allegiances that the years have canceled—

The way Wordsworth gazed on this side of his big poems
when he lived on, having accomplished: success had stopped him,
because he had succeeded. A person is himself,
and no one should call his accomplishment something
worth doing but still to be done: it was done.

Young poets met him when he was tired
and his bones were already made—
his wrist resting on a reading table, say,
and there'd be his pulse making the moment strong,
each pulse maybe the cue from fate.

He could hope so well; and hope, too,
was a part of his survival, the part he played—
he decided just to be the tired one in that place
for long enough, and to make poems
that would not quicken the pulse, till his turn came again.

Readers, he thought, would just have to get better;
he rested. Later when those young poets got drunk or went mad,
trying to herd their kaleidoscopes back into a certain fate,
Wordsworth could still go for a walk and wait
for the world to catch up to his lived rejoinder to Shelley:

Legislators are the unacknowledged poets of the world.

Constancy, by a Restoration Rake

W. ARTHUR BOGGS

I've been constant these two days together
But tomorrow may bring sunny weather.

I Cannot Be a Shepherd

S. J. SACKETT

I cannot be a shepherd and cry "Woe!"
Calling upon the gods to tell me where
My absent comrade is; nor would
He want me so to do. And yet
My grief desires a channel to run through.

I used to scoff at elegists, imagining
They only pretended to a grief who could
Meter it out of them; but this I feel
Teaches me that one may feel
That which cannot be said in prose.

It is not strange that one who taught
So much in life—so many facts,
But, more important, so much of what was good,
What true, what beautiful—should teach
This to me now that he is dead.

Dead? Yes, I suppose so, though I still
Cannot accept it quite: but yet not dead.
"But sleeping?" No, you miss the point.
"But unioned with the sempiternal earth?"
That is not what I meant at all.

I mean he lives: that Edward Hooker lives:
In me, more son than student,
And in all who sat around his table,
Smoking his cigarettes and drinking
In his wit and eloquence.

I mean that in my mind there is a part
That Edward Hooker is; and as I
Give it on to my disciples and they to theirs
That Edward Hooker shall not ever die,
That Edward Hooker shall become immortal.

I formed myself on him; there was
No man's opinion that I valued more.
I meant to make him proud by bringing true
The fond dream he had of me; and this
I shall, with help from God with whom he now is,

Do.

Like Season, Like Student

RAYMOND ROSELIEP

September, they punt and tackle and plunge
past pages uncut;
but even a prof may read himself
into a rut.

December, it's leaps for basketed space,
though footnotes don't jump,
and satcheled schoolboys creep like snails.
Ho, chest! down, thump!

Come March, whose pitch? who's up to bat?
The print will not rot.
What bard was an umpire? or, Was one?
I forgot.

June with a "Fore!" drowns Tennyson's "Break!"—
and exams fall next.
Students behind on their scores, see me.
Now, the text . . .

The Professor Retires

MARION MONTGOMERY

The Plan

He still keeps office hours ten to twelve,
A minor inconvenience to the staff
Who need the space—a certain Dr. Brooks
New come from Harvard and yet in a hurry.
But to break a habit suddenly—
They would not dare, since with the addict
Slacking off is proved the kinder way.
He still keeps office hours ten to twelve.

At the Office

He mounts, at their request, the carousel.
The wild stallion he woke on once ago
Stands chomping with a cocked and haughty ear;
Unhorsed by tender friends, he feels
The sleek back yet against his legs.
And masterfully confusing metaphor
They think they let him out to graze,
Not masterfully confusing mystery
Lest they confuse the rider with the ride.

To My Dear Friend, Professor Johnson, on Congreve's Comedy Call'd "The Way of the World"

(With an apology to John Dryden)

BERNARD LAZAR

Well then, the promis'd hour is come at last
To bring to light all judgments of the past
Which take a play that lacks both strength and wit
And call it good—because 'twas last he writ.
For, though the public lacks extensive sight,
This once we find the multitude in right;
And pedagogues too anxious to concede
To Congreve what was surely not his meed.
Though rail he did against his censor's tongue
In epilogue his own misfortune sung;
Anticipating what his play was worth
And trying to debauch them with such mirth
As, "Sure he must have more than mortal skill
Who pleases anyone against his will."
And, "Pray consider, e'er you doom its fall
How hard a thing 'twould be, to please you all."
(But certes, 'tis true, a poet need not fear
If what he writes is worth a nickel beer.)

That shortly later Congreve did retire
All spent—with not another play to sire—
Makes proof the thought that what was lastly writ
Was scratchings from a pen 'most dry of wit;
And all the ink that Congreve had in store
Was used till finally, he had no more!
Now, if to all this seems not to be true,
Where lives the man who lets his worst ensue?
For in this play we find a lack of thought
And plot confused that some think there is nought.
While humor there may be—'tis often strained
So much, that we can only think it feigned.
The satire, which should be both sharp and clear,
Is so beclouded, that there's none, I fear.
In this, he does not move the mind—
Not Fletcher's dialogue nor ease we find:
Expression's often dull, for judgment lacks;
The words are heavy; the style wears packs.
And (that which Dryden saw, and most infer)
His greatest crime was being regular.
Time and place are there—action must be sought;
Till found, in webs of boredom all is caught.
And though we see a certain technique here,

It lacks the universal strength to steer
 The course of int'rest in the reader's mind—
 Without the engine, the ship's confined!

Yet here I prophesy: If he be seen
 (Though with some short parenthesis between)
 High on the throne of wit for this—
 All justice and men's minds have gone amiss.
 So, take for granted what these lines express;
 Though many have done more—some *have* done less.

Thoughts on the Death

(future-inevitable) of e. e. cummings

SIDNEY L. GULICK

how
 does it feel, e. e.,
 to have become conventional
 to be in fact very lower case?
) the parenthesis ended, are you
 Translated to Regions Capitalized, E. E.?
 or has fate inverted you, $\sigma \cdot \sigma \cdot \sigma$
 or made you truly irrational $\sqrt{-c^2}$?
 What's your syn-tax now
 for the suppressed flutter of an eyelid
 allusive elusive illusive?

Thoreau Distresses Emerson

RICHARD C. PETTIGREW

Thorny Captain Thoreau, who ought to umpire empires,
 Expends his powers on engineering berry parties.
 The blue-eyed innocent berries, hand in hand,
 Play ring around the roses; and Thoreau flutes.

But berries with carnal knowledge of carts are damned to Boston;
 Their blighted bloom blasphemes the blue hosannas of the hill.
 The carter's horses hurry them past the home of Emerson,
 Whose hearing sourly flavors that horn-far flute.

Thoreau comes home to his Concord kitchen, and labors
 At pounding beans, and—some say—pounding Brahma;
 While Brahma's prophet profoundly broods across the village,
 And turns his back on beans and Huckleberry Heaven.

Snapshot

GEORGE GARRETT

At the Faculty Meeting I saw him bleed
for Nonconformity and, good classicist, bare
all his wounds, calling on us to rise, rebel,
to shrug the yoke, come down from bitter cross.

The President, I noticed, was impassive,
attentive and indifferent as a *croupier*.
Not the least fault or fissure of emotion
troubled the contour of his familiar smile.

All this is Ancient History.
We live and learn.

The Gadfly was promoted while
Rebels were scattered like a covey of quail
in everywhich direction.
Folding their caps and gowns like Arab tents,
they muttered "tar and feathers," fled.

Now over coffee, steaming rich
subsistence of the academic Nerve,
I hear him say: "What we need
is less of milk and honey and more sting.
Things hereabouts are whitewashed. Let us
act. A little water clears us of the deed.
And what do *you* think?"

I smile and shrug.
I pay the check and plead a class
and leave him talking still,
safe in the shadow of the Great Man,
a trim Diogenes in tub of honest tweed.

Stratford

WILLIAM VAN O'CONNOR

Kind Friend, for Jesus sake forbear
To make me more substantial than the air,
Stratford, to you I leave my dust,
Biographer, I leave to you my bust.

Ode on the Restoration of a Keats Nightingale

HARRY M. BROWN

Here on these pages ancient time enjoys
 Perpetual resurrection. Yesterday
 Outwits the years with ink, and over noise
 Of crumbling eras printed voices say:

The voice I hear this passing night was heard
 Nine months after the Fanny episode,
 When, caught between the critic and the bird,
 Tuberculosis coughed a frantic ode.

Through the sad heart of Ruth, when sick—a blend
 of Greek and Christian seen, by Sharp, in Ruth
 And Bacchus, as the Marbles did portend.
 Cp. the Grecian Urn's Beauty and Truth.

Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
of perilous seas and closing on three-ten
 Of Murray's critical collection. Dome
 Of Adonais proves the colored pen.

In faery lands. Here beauty holds a feast.
 See Colvin's comment on Brown's comment, with,
 Of course, the two new letters just released
 On nightingalism in English myth.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
 To toll back that fled music. Though we sleep
 Or wake, immortal Truth and Beauty spell
 Their magic over critics buried deep.

Enter Bachelor Prof with Uke

RAYMOND ROSELIEP

He brought a ukulele to his class,
 played from a poet not immortal:
 about a sailor and his faithless lass,
 and why the swabby downed a bottle.

He warbled sad as Keats's nightingale:
 "The poor fish cut her heart asunder";
 when "No one budged to raise the lubber's bail,"
 he wept, and made his students wonder.

Sonnet at Semester's End

KENNETH E. EBLE

That time of year thou mayst in them behold
When papers late, or none, or few, do hang
Within those brows which shake against the cold,
Bare, unstroked lyres, where too late sweet birds sang.
In me they see'st the twilight of their days,
And after sunset pondereth on my jests,
Which by-and-by a meaner wit betrays,
Death's pedant self, that seals their fates in tests.
In me they see the glowing of such fire
That scorcheth those who sloth cannot deny,
And in my grade book silently expire,
Consumed because they were not nourished by.
This they perceivest, which fruitless pleas prolong,
To love that well which they must fail ere long.

Home Is the Sailor

RICHARD C. PETTIGREW

Sweet-scented among the swine, he hoards his homing.
He sits fathering fable with wine-red words,
Peopling bogus beaches with surf-skirted Circes,
And steeping startling hills with jack-in-the-box giants.

His son Telemachus leans and listens from his courteous corner,
And, sleepless from snooping on suitors, shuns counting the sheep
That drowsily follow his father's bellwether words.

And half-ashamed of the shambles he is making of his far-flung
Loitering with lullaby ladies, in the tale he is telling,
Odysseus knows he is doodling to save the face of his dawdling.

He dreads matching memories of his wasp-waisted wife
With what, pregnant with time, her bodily bulge may be.
Would she waddle to welcome her prodigal lord with fatted calves?

And so he begets the Sirens, and lovingly strings their lyres.

The Heart of the Matter

JOHN E. BELLAMY

That Beatrice, by Tuscan Dante loved,
Who through his magic numbers was assigned
The station of a petal in God's rose,
Was flesh and bones and blood-filled womankind.

The lady Laura, she whom Petrarch fed
By rimes umbilical, and brought to birth
A green-appareled sonnet, had, no doubt,
A rude solidity, and weight and girth.

And each ethereal lady courtly loved
And stoppered in a castle, certainly
Displaced her scented water when she bathed
With mass of measurable density.

The stuff has vanished, while the dreams remain;
But squinting back along the misty ways,
Historians of the dream must contemplate
Some weighty matter bulking in the haze.

On Academic Despair

W. T. MOYNIHAN AND F. S. KILEY

Between bell-spaced vacuums comes the time
When the burdened conscience gives a cautious nudge
To the bespeckled soul who earns his dime
Apportioning intellectual fudge;
Freshman themes make him Swift
And irony threatens the rheumy air;
The bold male saplings, devoid of pith,
Are bored. Girls finger their glossy hair.

There is some hope in shouting down a well—
Distance may purify the coarsest sound
And softly echo it back like a silver bell,
But here there is no depth, just barren ground.
Poets may cry in their sullen art and craft
But instructors should only learn to laugh.

The MLA Paper

D. C.

Walk to the looming stand and bow with due
Respect for Drs. Kahn and Pettigrew.
The former made this academic dream come true.

Remove the title sheet and clear your throat
And now, before you start, undo your coat.
(Lest Dr. Pettigrew decline again to note
The magic key dependent from your—vest.)

Roll now the ball upon its anxious course,
Not with the sort of joke to make them hoarse
With mirth, but only smile and force
A chuckle to their various lips
(Where other lips appear exiled
From birth.)

Oh, gently sway and weave the slumbrous words
That, baffling through the smokened gloom, like birds
At dusk, bring thoughts of rest
And thoughts of . . . No! Press on, brave heart.
Who knows? *PMLA* may publish yet a part
Of this.
(And upset someone's little applecart!)

Stick firm to guns, say I myself to me.
Bad bargains made the more are loved to be.
Watch red-rimmed, darting, eager eyes
And seeing how they roll look to the skies
From which, shut out for all their view,
Come down each night my memories of You.

Without them, Sire, I were a deadened thing.
Without your arms about my heart, nor sing
Nor laugh might I, but only cling
To eager hope and frantic prayer
That I may one day win a Harvard chair.

Dessert in the Faculty Club

(A Cartoon)

WILLIAM H. VAN VORIS

Domesticated, plump, in middle age,
 The Valiant Champion of the Living Wage
 Deserts the radical for liberal arts
 To fondle fellowships with sugared tarts
 And gilded prose. So pedants venerate
 Those whom they feel are safely out of date,
 And lunch the Novelist of Labor's Might
 In honor on the Social Chairman's right;
 There, chatting of his art and agent's fees,
 His eyes benign approve the Ph.D.'s
 Scratching like mice among his platitudes
 In search of nice unpublished attitudes:

Yes, he knew Dreiser in his salad days—
Rather an elephant in many ways,
 But then, *that is the sort of thing that pays.*

He masticates nostalgia, sucks a spoon,
 And frames his smile about a macaroon:
*Before, it was before, when I went down
 To study Communists in Provincetown
 Where wobbling with Wobblies by the sea
 I first saw Labor's multiplicity,
 And Harvard seemed as very far away
 As old Joe Hill is moribund today.*

Harvard? You knew beloved Kittredge when—
 The Chairman, now awake, remembers then
An anecdote from Dream about a fen.

(His staff, informed, now sleep; their lacquered eyes
 Refract philologist and custard pies;
 But hearing tenure flutter in the smoke
 They yield their laughter to their Chairman's joke.)
 The Novelist's pink smile and waistband swell;
 It seems that he knew Kitty pretty well:
 Recalls remarks upon a Falstaff pun,
 And toys a sugared currant from a bun.
 Indeed recalls the anecdote from *Dream*,
 And even some statistics on the team.

Now pedant's pince-nez with the writer's shine;
 The two alumni's memories intertwine
 And leap a *pas de deux* in older dates
 Around about the empty luncheon plates—
 But stumble on one awkward question more;

A pedant (unpromoted) plays the bore:
If memory serves, haven't you once said
In Harvard Yard one 'starves amongst the dead'?
Ah perhaps, perhaps,
But that was but a lapse, another dream—
Yes, sugar, thanks; be Liberal with the cream.

Poet Bites Job

WILLIAM STAFFORD

"The wisest thing after the wisdom of time
 will be the songs made out of philosophy
 when the people take back their original property
 and dance it again and let it grow out of rhyme."

Seeing scholars chant so, I sing like the devil, in style,
 proclaiming in song that I want to join their line,
 for *do si do* is the way I like to learn.
 As for sober thought—I'm too damn versatile.

Professor Writing

JOHN HOLMES

Walking to work, I walk toward sun,
 Not symbolically but daily so,
 And every day of the week but one.

I come dazzled to what I must do.
 I cannot get the sun out of my eyes
 That stares from the northeast view.

My students shine too, they show
 Ancestral cheekbones, under their names
 Writing what they know they know.

Six days of the week I walk
 East to tell beginners how to begin.
 On a seventh day I write, not talk.

I write with my back to the sun,
 My own shadow shielding my page,
 Darkening what I have hardly done.

On Last Teaching Hawthorne

EDWARD STONE

He goes for filters, like a young man should,
Dials into Burdette's pitch, State's single wing,
Exchanges private grips of brotherhood,
His Mercury loses its leaves in the spring.
She tongues her cud, nudges vagrant hair ends,
Her left A-cup impales a jeweled pin,
She spins Bing, Belafonte, Boone, and lends
The lure of Fire and Ice to canted fin.
They lunge from java, sinkers, Ernie Ford,
Stamp out fresh cigarettes in rataplan,
Prime ball-point pens, shift skirts, remove slide rules.
Coughs slowly cease. Eyes note me at the board
Imprint (*cp.* Metalious, Sagan)
On sable field the letter A in gules.

Such Stuff as Themes Are Made On

JOHN N. MORRIS

Fragment. Comma. Sentence Sense.
Agreement. Dash. Coherence. Tense.
Spelling. Diction. Active Voice.
Exactness. Paragraph. Word Choice.
Person. Number. Mood. Broad Ref.
Italics. Jargon. Colon. F.

Semester's End

ROBERT A. HUME

Compelled to play God again, I mete out judgment as
God only knows, doing his best, of course, to
let the record decide, for it is fitting
that authority be documented. Sometimes

The record spits, telegraphic and utter, as when
it announces, for example, of Mr. X that
his football hands composed but one paper
out of the twelve demanded and his foot-

Ball legs declined on twenty occasions to
carry him as far as the classroom; and the
ineffably coiffured Miss Y, her sentence also
is curtly pronounced by the ciphered page.

As for Miss Q, however, there is nothing here that
defines her as glandular and lonely, though
one knows she is both and so merits something
for pity, if God may tolerate the precarious

Notion that pity belongs in the score; and the
case of Mr. P is vexing, since with his enviable
background he knew many of the answers in
advance and thus might have striven to ask

Himself and heaven some salient questions but instead
played winkie across the table with Miss G,
who thought he was cute and so conceived and
produced the sorority prose that dully passes.

If God had breveted himself merely to blast skulls
with knowledge, the general outcome would
seem acceptable, though he might still confront
the ramparts of ingratitude and wish he had

Used defter armaments; but knowing as he does that
his mission was not only to break down
walls but to establish beyond them the
banner that cries out forever, Let there

Be light, he must lament reporting the semi-triumph
that is failure. Oh, he can give the grades
and close the book and his eyes, but at last he
must grade himself; and it is then he will learn

He is damned, damned, with not even his hell to hide him.

Metrical Deviations and the Teaching of Poetry

WALLACE L. ANDERSON

Meter is, in one way at least, the most paradoxical element in poetry: It is immediately apparent yet extremely elusive. And because of this it is the most difficult aspect of poetry to teach. Although teachers constantly assert the fundamental importance of meter, and constantly exhort their students to read poetry aloud, many students fail to see the significance of meter. In fact, they often have such a distorted conception of it that the pleasure of the poetic experience, if not destroyed, is greatly impaired. This is not always the fault of the students.

Teachers handle the problem of meter in a number of ways. One method is to use the *ineffable approach*. The effects of meter are so subtle and varied, says the teacher, that it is impossible to talk about them. The only way to appreciate the part that meter plays is to read poetry aloud or to listen carefully while someone else reads. The instructor then proceeds to read a poem aloud to illustrate the point. Although sensitive oral reading is an essential part of the poetic experience, this method alone is not enough. The student, it is true, will experience something of the musical pleasure of poetry. And this is basically important. But merely hearing a poem read aloud is like going to a symphony without being able to follow the musical themes. If a student is to have anything approaching a full poetic experience—something over and above the sense-meanings of the words—he must have some understanding of the various elements that go into the making of a poem and how they work together to produce a unified whole that is esthetically satisfying. In order to achieve this, the student must be shown what things to look

for, and he must be given some explanation of how they operate and why they are significant. This is true not only of such elements in poetry as imagery and figurative language but of meter as well. The greater the understanding, the greater the possibilities—depending on the poem and the maturity of the reader—for a more satisfying emotional and intellectual response. Treating meter as if it were ineffable leaves most students with the feeling that meter is a mystery understandable, in some uncanny way, only to teachers.

Another method of dealing with meter is to use the *heroic approach*. Convinced of the importance of meter himself, the instructor is determined that his students are really going to learn meter. He carefully explains that meter in English poetry depends primarily on accent, that there are four principal metrical units, and that, according to the number and kind of these metrical units appearing in a verse, we speak of poems as being written in such meters as iambic pentameter, trochaic trimeter, dactylic hexameter, and anapestic tetrameter. The instructor then braces himself heroically and devotes several excruciating class periods to making sure that the students have learned the different meters. Line after line and poem after poem are put on the board, and the students, dutiful but bewildered, go through the motions of scanning. Indeed some of the students become quite skillful at this sort of thing, so much so that they can make a sonnet come out iambic pentameter all the way through every time. Most students, fortunately, never attain this degree of competence, but they wish that they could. Like the ineffable approach, the results of such a method alone are also

unfortunate. Many students acquire the misconception that meter is, or should be, perfectly regular. (This misconception is not limited to beginning students. Recently a graduate student who teaches poetry in high school, was somewhat shocked to discover that there are more than five stresses in the line "Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.") Moreover, because the functions of meter have not been clearly demonstrated, few students have any idea that meter is a meaningful part of the poem as a whole. The heroic approach tends to become a perfunctory exercise which substitutes identification for understanding. The total poem has been lost because a means has become an end.

The ineffable approach and the heroic approach are of course extremes. Many teachers, recognizing the limitations of each method alone, combine the two in a sincere attempt to help the students understand meter. The trouble is, however, that neither singly nor in combination will these two methods reveal to the average student the significance of meter as a functioning part of the poem as a whole. They do not answer the critical question: What is the relationship between meter and the rest of the poem?

Some teachers, it is true, do attempt to answer this question. The answer usually given is that the meter is *appropriate*. Appropriateness is easily demonstrable, and the procedure is simple. Out come the old warhorses: "Boots," "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix," "Sea-Fever"—each teacher has his favorite examples. And the response is quick. It is clear that the meter in these poems suggests the steady monotonous pace of men marching, the furious action of horses galloping, and the easy movement of the waves rising and falling. Meter is indeed appropriate. The instructor is pleased, and the students, apparently, are content.

The recognition that meter is gen-

erally appropriate is a forward step, because it indicates that meter is in some way related to the rest of the poem. Appropriateness of this sort, however, is but a beginning. The poems usually chosen to illustrate appropriateness are poems of action which have strongly marked rhythms, often anapestic or dactylic. But what about poems that are not concerned with marching, battle, horseback riding, seafaring—poems in which action is either a minor element or lacking entirely? The most common meter in English poetry is iambic; there are thousands of iambic poems with highly varied subjects. To what extent is the term *appropriate* meaningful with regard to the meter in such poems? If students are asked to make an analysis of a poem, they usually manage to include a statement that the meter is effective or appropriate. If pressed as to why and how the meter is appropriate, they defend their statements by arguing in a circle. First they state the subject or theme of the poem; then, because meter in good poems is supposed to be appropriate, they attribute the appropriateness of the one to the other.

The major obstacle that prevents the perception of meter as a dynamic and significant force is the identification of meter with regularity. To overcome such a distorted conception, I have found it helpful to stress the importance of irregularity in meter. For most students the significance of meter becomes more apparent if emphasis is given to metrical deviations.

To emphasize the deviations is not to deny the importance of regularity in meter. Without regularity meter would not exist. But for teaching purposes, the point in shifting the emphasis to metrical deviations is that the regularity of meter is least in need of attention. The reader takes care of it almost automatically, for the human nervous system has a natural tendency to organize sensory impressions. It is impossible for us to take the

total impact of all the sensory stimuli which constantly bombard us; we cannot attend to them all. Instead we organize these stimuli into units that we can handle. This is true of sounds as well as other stimuli. Repeated sounds are naturally organized into regular groups. When we listen to the ticking of a watch, we do not hear *tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick*; we hear *TICK tick tick tick, TICK tick tick tick, or TICK-tock, TICK-tock, TICK-tock, TICK-tock*. Similarly, when we listen to the wheels of a train clicking on the rails, we do not hear an endless series of isolated, individuated clicks; we hear *CLICK click click click, CLICK click click click, or CLICKety-clack, CLICKety-clack*.

The same kind of organizing process goes on within us when we read a poem. It is the poet, of course, who starts it by his choice of metrical pattern. But once the basic pattern has been established, it is we who must continue it. This basic pattern is the subjective meter. It is the pulse, the beat, the measuring element in meter, and it is perfectly regular. With this the students have little difficulty. On the contrary, it is just because the subjective meter is so apparent that many students have the impression that the subjective meter is all there is to meter. That they were unaware of the subtler and more significant aspects of meter is evidenced in the sing-song way in which many of them read poetry aloud, in the vague way in which they talk about "effectiveness" and "appropriateness," and in the uncomfortable feeling of apprehension that settles over the class whenever the topic of meter is introduced.

English words do not naturally fall into regular metrical patterns. As used in everyday speech, words have their own characteristic accents and rhetorical stress patterns, and these are not lost when words are used in a poem.¹ If the words in a line of poetry are metrically

regular, it is because they have been so arranged by the poet. A metrically regular line is one in which the natural rhetorical stresses have been made to coincide with the stresses of the basic metrical pattern, the subjective meter. There are, however, relatively few good poems in English which are metrically regular throughout. A metrically regular poem, unless intended to be incantatory or hypnotic, would be monotonous; it would be tiresome on the musical level alone. Furthermore, if the meter were perfectly regular, there would be no way in which meter could function significantly; its function would be merely metronomic. However, when metrical deviations are introduced, that is, when the rhetorical stress pattern runs counter to the stress pattern of the subjective meter, meter takes on a more active role. Psychologically adjusted to the inner metronome of the subjective meter, the reader is surprised and alerted when the regularity is interrupted. Hence any deviation is bound to produce interest because it breaks the monotony. Metrical deviations are a means, first of all, of achieving variety. More important than variety, however, are the functions of emphasis and tempo control, for they permit meter to relate to other elements in the poem. The following two lines will serve to illustrate these functions:

Shone like a meteor stream¹ing to the wind
(*Paradise Lost*, I, 537)

Thou'rt slave to Fate, Chance, kings, and
desperate men (Holy Sonnet X)

¹A word that is normally stressed in everyday speech retains its stress in poetry. The reverse, however, is not always true; for an unstressed word in ordinary speech may receive stress in poetry to satisfy the demands of meter, provided it does not interfere with the sense. The basic principle is this: when metrical stress and rhetorical stress conflict, rhetorical stress takes precedence.

The subjective meter of both lines is iambic pentameter, yet these lines produce quite different effects as a result of the metrical deviations and the individual contexts in which they appear. In the first line, a trochee has been substituted in the first foot and a pyrrhic in the fourth. The result is a balanced line in which the initial word "Shone" is given emphasis and brought into a parallel relationship with "streaming." Furthermore, the tempo of the line has been increased because there are six unstressed syllables. In the second line, a spondee has been substituted in the third foot, resulting in greater emphasis not only to "Chance," which occupies an unstressed position in the subjective meter, but to "Fate" and "kings" as well because of the piling up of stresses in the middle of the line. Unlike the first, however, Donne's line moves at a slower pace because it contains six stresses, three of which occur in juxtaposition. In both lines, the metrical deviations emphasize important words and control the tempo of the lines.

These effects of metrical deviations are apparent even when the lines are considered in isolation. When the individual contexts in which the lines appear are taken into account, the functional nature of the metrical changes becomes more evident. In the first line, from *Paradise Lost*, Satan had just made his way to the shore of the burning lake of Hell and had called his legions together, who "came flocking; but with looks—Downcast and damp." When they were all assembled, Satan re-established his command, lifted the spirits of his legions, and ordered his standard to be raised aloft. Part of the effectiveness of the scene is the change from despair and disorder to valiance and order as Satan's army rallies to his call. Central in the scene is "The imperial ensign, which full high advanced—Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind." The stress given "Shone" helps point up the contrast,

and the rapid tempo of the line reinforces the image of the unfurled standard fluttering in the wind.

Donne's Holy Sonnet X opens with the lines "Death be not proud, though some have called thee / Mighty and dreadful, for, thou are not soe." The tone of the octave, though not light, is a combination of semi-playful taunting and pity. The line "Thou'rt slave to Fate, Chance, kings, and desperate men" notably marks the change from octave to sestet. The contrast between Death the mighty and Death the slave is explicitly stated, but it is also given added force because of the collocation of stresses in the first line of the sestet. Moreover, the slow, heavy movement of the line contributes to the changed tone of biting scorn and deliberate contempt as Donne prepares to pronounce sentence of death.

The function of metrical deviations have been indicated by two lines from different poems. The extent to which metrical deviations may work together with other elements may be demonstrated more clearly by examining the operation of the more important deviations in a single poem.

Shakespeare's Sonnet 73 has been justly admired for its imagery. That the speaker is growing old is not stated; the idea is presented in a series of three complex images linked together by thought and a progressive narrowing of time and darkening of color: a sere tree in late autumn; fading twilight, which is soon to be succeeded by black night; and an evening fire about to die out. The poem is built on these images. Indeed, they stand out so vividly and play so important a part in the poem that one may neglect the other elements which contribute to the effectiveness of the imagery and to the totality of the poem. Both sound and meter have strong supporting roles. The points at which they function most significantly are indicated in the text below:

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
 When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
 Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
 Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
 In me, thou see'st the twilight of such day
 As after sunset fadeth in the west,
 Which by and by black night doth take away,
 Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
 In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
 That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
 As the death-bed whereon it must expire
 Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.
 This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
 To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

An alliterative pattern of b-d runs throughout the poem. It is notable that for the most part the b's and d's are concentrated on words that are central in the imagery, especially in lines 4, 7, 8, and 11. It is even more remarkable that the major metrical deviations occur at precisely the same points. Important as the imagery is in this poem, it is not the imagery alone but the interaction of sense, imagery, sound and, what is too often neglected, meter functioning ac-

tively with these elements that makes this sonnet such a satisfying poetic experience.

Directing the students' attention to metrical deviations will not solve all the problems in the teaching of poetry. Nor will it answer all the questions connected with meter and rhythm. But it will enable the students to see that meter is not just something in poetry that is vaguely there but a dynamic force that is a significant part of a poem.

Poetry, Poetic, Poem

SAM HYNES

In *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, T. S. Eliot remarks that "there are these two theoretical limits of criticism: at one of which we attempt to answer the question 'what is poetry?' and at the other 'is this a good poem?'" Although, as Eliot goes on to say, "no theoretic ingenuity will suffice to answer the second question," yet it is on that question that most recent theoretic ingenuity has been expended. As a result, a sophisticated and complex terminology for dealing with the individual poem has

grown up—structure, texture, tenor, vehicle, for example—at the same time that more fundamental distinctions have been taken for granted. It seems desirable that we should return, from time to time, to Eliot's first question, to re-examine our assumptions about first terms.

It may be useful to expand the critical problem set in that first question in some such fashion as this: What do the following three statements imply, and what interrelationships exist among

them?

- X is poetry.
- X is poetic.
- X is a poem.

The three terms are necessarily common to the lexicon of every teacher of literature. Yet, because they are common, the teacher is not likely to use them with the same cautious precision with which he uses, say, *tenor*, but loosely—formally or normatively as the occasion demands, and without respect for their obvious cognate relationships.

Let us take as an example of this critical propensity a passage from a recently published introduction to poetry. The paragraph occurs in the course of a discussion relating poetry to other forms of discourse, imaginative and otherwise.

Between poetry and other forms of imaginative literature there is no sharp distinction. You may have been taught to believe that poetry can be recognized by the arrangement of its lines on the page or by its use of rime and meter. Such superficial tests are almost worthless. The Book of Job in the Bible and Melville's *Moby Dick* are highly poetical, but a versified theorem in physics is not.

Then follows this footnote:

For instance, the following, found accidentally by Bliss Perry (*A Study of Poetry*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1920, p. 155) in a textbook on *The Parallelogram of Forces*. Printed as verse, it has the same meter and rime scheme as Tennyson's *In Memoriam*:

And hence no force, however great,
Can draw a cord, however fine,
Into a horizontal line
Which shall be absolutely straight.

The paragraph then continues:

The difference between poetry and other literature is one only of degree. Poetry is the most condensed and concentrated form of literature, saying most in the fewest number of words. It is language whose individual lines, either because of their own brilliance or because they focus so powerfully

what has gone before, have a higher voltage than most language has. It is language which grows frequently incandescent, giving off both light and heat.¹

The basic assumption here is that *poetry* is not a form of discourse, but a relative term indicating a degree of condensation and concentration in the language of imaginative writing. From this it would seem to follow that *poetic* is simply an adjective identifying discourse which achieves that degree of condensation. Later in the same book, however, the author remarks: "Poetry is not so much a thing as a quality. Though we cannot always say definitely, 'This is poetry; that is not,' we can often say, 'This is more poetical than that.'" Apparently, then, the *poetical* is a quality separable from poetry, and more easily identifiable than poetry, though in ways which are not made clear. Neither quotation makes any positive statement about the meaning of *poem*, but the first quoted does make the negative point that a discourse may be in a conventional metrical form and yet not be a poem.

The consistent assumption in these quoted remarks is that poetry is a condition or quality without any necessary relation to form, a kind of radiation which the critic's geiger counter picks up and recognizes as the real thing. Prose of sufficient density is poetry, in this view; verse of excessive slackness is not. Probably few teachers or critics would put their assumptions this baldly, but I am convinced that these are the sub rosa principles on which many of them operate.

The critic who does take this normative view of the nature of poetry is faced with a perplexing question: if the locus of poetry is not in its form, where is it? The answer is usually (as in the quoted passage) an appeal to poetic language, as being a medium of discourse

¹Laurence Perrine, *Sound and Sense* (1956), pp. 9-10.

distinguishable from the non-poetic by reason of its greater beauty or intensity, or by some kind of extra dimension. The esthetic implications of this assertion have been explored by various critics (e.g., Eliseo Vivas, "What Is a Poem?" *Creation and Discovery*, 1955); I will content myself with merely adding a few elementary observations. The term *language* is itself ambiguous: it may mean a distinct kind of communication (as we speak, for example, of the language of flowers, or of birds), and in this sense the statement that poetry is a kind of language has a partial, metaphorical validity. But often, as in the paragraph I first quoted, the implication seems to be that *language* means simply *words*, and that certain categories of words or statements are excluded from the category of poetry: the language of a theorem in physics, for example, is apparently radically non-poetic, and if this is so one might reasonably extend this exclusion to other scientific terminology. But then what about these words from biology: *animalcula*, *fibril*, *vein*, *tissues*, *nerves*, *pulses*, *lobule*? They all occur in the Forescene of Hardy's *Dynasts*: is it therefore prose? On the other hand, is the language of *Moby-Dick* and *The Book of Job* so distinctly incandescent that we must call them poetry? The obvious point, it seems to me, is that the density of poetic language is a function of the interrelationships of words in context, and not of the words themselves. To argue the latter case is to fall into some form of the "beautiful, gentlemen, beautiful" fallacy, asserting that poetry has its own vocabulary, which is poetic because it is beautiful, and which, as a category of language, pre-exists the individual poem.

But if poetry is not a kind of language, what is it? I would say that it is simply a collective term for all poems, as humanity is a collective term for all men. It implies no value judgment, but

simply recognition of membership in a class; that is, discourse which is poetry is not superior to discourse which is not—it is simply different. Many teachers will no doubt find this definition objectionable; they will argue that *poetry* is a normative term, by no means applicable to all metrical discourse, and that another term should be used for the lower ranks. The term most often applied to this inferior metrical discourse is *verse*, a term which carries, in this usage, implications of banality and technical poverty. This poetry-verse distinction is a very common one, but it is not, it seems to me, very valuable. In defining *verse* one is usually simply defining a bad poem, and surely it is more useful for the critic to say "this poem is better than that one" than to say "this is poetry, that is verse." Furthermore, the verse-poetry distinction forces one to assert that some poems are not poetry, a semantic snarl which it seems wise to avoid.

If *poetry* is to be taken as a collective term for all poems, then we had better define *poem*. I would argue that the simplest and most useful definition is the one disallowed in the passage I first quoted: a poem is a discourse in the form of an arrangement of lines on a page, an organized pattern of rhythm and sound. It is distinguished from prose by its more highly organized sound patterns, and by the fact that line length is determined by rhythmic units, and not simply by the width of the page. This definition, though it may seem rather bare, has at least the virtue of excluding prose, of whatever incandescence, and of making the term *poem* a descriptive rather than a normative term.

If one accepts this basic definition, then the category of poems includes items like "Thirty days hath September" and the White Rabbit's "They told me you had been to her." I see no objection to such inclusiveness—the range is

no greater, surely, than we allow to the category of novels. But for the reader who objects, I suggest that it is possible to distinguish between the class of mnemonic or nonsense rhymes and what a purist would call *poems*, though I don't think the distinction is best made in terms of condensation and concentration (after all, "Thirty days hath September" is fairly condensed, as compared with, say, "The Garden of Proserpine"). I would prefer to make the distinguishing term "symbolic extension," by which I mean the capacity of a poem to mean more than it says. This does not distinguish a poem from imaginative prose—the form does that—but it does distinguish it from lesser kinds of discourse in poetic form. That is, the mnemonic rhyme means only itself—we know how many days each month has, but nothing more—and the nonsense rhyme means nothing; but a poem (in the normative sense of the term) means more than itself; it suggests, or symbolizes, general propositions. This distinction has the merit of not depending on kinds of language for its formulation; however, I see no compelling reason for making the distinction at all, and I would prefer to regard both the mnemonic rhyme and the symbolic discourse as poems.

To turn now to our third term, *poetic*: I have already quoted one example of the popular view that we can distinguish the more "poetical" from the less without regard to the form of the objects involved. This notion that discourse may be poetic, while remaining prose, echoes the common conviction that the qualities of poetry may exist without the form of poetry, a conviction closely related to the "beautiful words" conception of poetry, and I think, equally invalid. If *poetry* refers to a form of discourse, then *poetic* must also have a formal referent. If this is true, then it is meaningless to say that "the Book of Job in the Bible and Melville's

Moby-Dick are highly poetical, but a versified theorem in physics is not." The versified theorem may be a bad poem, but *Moby-Dick* is no poem at all.

This brings us once more to the offending footnote, and to the stanza which is not poetry. My first reaction to the quatrain was that, while it obviously was not a poem as it stood, it might well be a part of a poem, in which case it would be both poetry and poetic. The situation offered seems to invite metaphysical invention, and even as it stands, the problem of perfect straightness suggests the symbolic extension which I have offered as a defining characteristic of poems above the level of doggerel. Unfortunately, we do not have a context for the lines; neither the author of the note, nor Bliss Perry (who first cited the quatrain to point out inadvertent regular rhythms in prose, and not to claim that the quatrain is by nature unsusceptible to poetic elevation) offers any preceding matter. I have therefore composed a few stanzas to serve as a context in which we may see the quatrain plain.

THE CORD

The soul is like a knotted cord
That ever more entangled grows,
Nor can be straightened till it knows
The disentangling of the Word.

No fingers of mortality
Can solve the knot that Adam tied,
The knot for which our Saviour died;
None can untie it—only He.

But though the strains of angels draw
The looped line upward toward the Son,
Whose straightness is Perfection
And linear semblance of the Law

Yet man, in his depravity
Will still devise his own release,
Himself unloose his soul's unease,
And stretch it horizontally:

Which cannot be, for straightness still
Is stretching after God above;

Those souls alone which strain toward
Love
Find their perfection in His Will.

And hence no force, however great,
Can draw a cord, however fine,
Into a horizontal line
Which shall be absolutely straight.

Now I will admit at once that "The Cord" reads like the work of a demented domestic servant of George Herbert, and I claim no merit for it at all. Neverthe-

less, I can see no way of denying its right to the name of poetry. To call it a poem is simply to identify it as belonging to the category of metrical discourse. Beyond this the critic has the full abusive resources of the English language at his command, by which to answer Eliot's second question: "Is this a good poem?" But we cannot abuse accurately until we first agree to use precisely the critic's most basic terms: *poetry*, *poetic* and *poem*.

MAX HERZBERG, 1886-1958

The death on 21 January of Max Herzberg, President of the Council in 1943 and recently Director of NCTE Publications, removes one of the most devoted of teachers and educational publicists from the national scene. Born in New York, he lived in South Orange, N. J. and taught in Newark, where he was Head of the English Department at Central High School, 1912-1929, and Principal of Weequahic High School from 1933. Besides his Council activities—he was First Vice-President in 1929, 1936, and 1942, as well as member of many committees—he was Literary Editor of the *Newark Evening and Sunday News* from 1919 on, and was President of the Stephen Crane Associa-

tion, 1924-1930. He wrote, edited, or collaborated on *Speaking and Writing English* (1925), *Myths and Their Meaning* (1928), *New Style-Book of Business English* (1928), *Outline of Contemporary American and British Literature* (1928), *Romance* (1932), *The Mark Twain Omnibus* (1935), *Americans in Action* (1937), *Radio and English Teaching* (1940), *Humor of America* (1945), and many other books. At the 1957 NCTE Convention, he received the W. Wilbur Hatfield Award for long and meritorious service to the Council and to the profession. Mrs. Herzberg died in 1956; two sons survive their father. No more humane and conscientious teacher and educator than Max Herzberg could be imagined.

Counciletter

THE STATE OF ENGLISH TEACHING

JOSEPH MERSAND

The year 1957-1958 might well be called by educational historians the year of soul-searching. Several times during the year one agency or another studied educational practices in various schools and then printed the findings under such eye-catching headlines as "Graduates Fail in Basic Skills of Three Rs" (*N.Y. World-Telegram and Sun*, 10 Dec.); "The Big School Controversy: Adjustment vs. Knowledge" (*Look*, 11 June). Occasionally the pronouncement of a single educator would get such a headline as "Dean Wants to Send 3 Rs Back to School" (*N.Y. World-Telegram and Sun*, 24 Dec.); or the complaints of a number of students would be summarized in "Collegeians Irked by Lag in English" (*N.Y. Times*, 24 Nov.).

Yet the headlines and editorials did not always indicate discontent with the state of English teaching. The annual report of President Edwin S. Burdell of Cooper Union won the headline, "Liberal Arts Courses Urged for Scientists." (*N.Y. World-Telegram*, 12 Dec.). The "beep-beeps" of the sputniks croaked this statement from the editorial writer of *The New York Times* (12 Nov.):

Scientists and technicians, yes, and the more the better. But the essential base before becoming scientist or technician or anything else, is to obtain a glimpse of the broader horizons of life, the literature, the arts, the history, the philosophy, the language, the humanistic studies that constitute the foundation for our culture, and place it in relation with the ages and the experiences of mankind that have gone before.

George B. Leonard, Jr., *Look* staff writer, who visited over a hundred classrooms in a year and a half, concluded (11 June) that Modern teaching methods are sound The best modern teaching insists that the pupil participate in the learning process; it takes into consideration individual differences and rate of growth, and it infuses facts with meaning. Significantly, these methods are most

effective when brought to bear on the basic subjects.

One gets the impression that the more extensive the study, the more pleased the observer seems to be with his observations. The more carefully the observer looks into the tremendous and awe-inspiring problems of teaching some aspect of English to almost 40,000,000 men, women, and children who are going to schools in America, the more profoundly impressed he becomes with the results. Never before have Americans or any other educators attempted to provide so much English education to so many!

That the task is difficult no one will deny; that errors have been made would be natural to expect; that the results are not uniformly excellent need be no cause for alarm. They were never really much better, if all factors are taken into consideration in one's analysis. The English teaching profession today faces the same challenges it has always seemed to face: oversized classes, inadequate textbooks, excessive responsibilities in non-English teaching areas, heterogeneous classes as to abilities, interests, and intentions, indifference or lack of cooperation from parents and/or administrators as to the special problems of their subject, and especially in 1958 the threat of minimizing the importance of our subject in favor of greater emphasis on science and mathematics.

Despite these perennial obstacles and the more recent ones, the gains of our profession locally and on a nation-wide scale should make us all proud. I should like to list a few of the more significant ones:

1. Curriculum revision. Thanks to the three volumes of the NCTE Curriculum Commission already published, there has been an interest in improving the English curriculum such as has probably never existed before in our land. New courses of study in English at various levels of the

school system are appearing with heartening regularity, whether they come from such an enormous school system as New York City, which has recently adopted new courses of study in K-6, Junior High, and Senior High, or from a relatively small school system like Bethlehem, Pa. Thousands of teachers, supervisors, and administrators, have been engaged in the past ten years since the Curriculum Commission was organized in one of the greatest curriculum adventures in educational history. Such facts do not make melodramatic headlines, but they merit greater publicity than they have received.

2. Greater articulation and appreciation of the need for articulation. For decades one echelon of English teachers has criticized the next lower echelon for its failure to teach the fundamentals. The kindergarten would have to blame the parent and his environment, for lack of any lower echelon. Today, more and more we are seeing greater understanding among all the English teachers, whom a child meets from his earliest years in school to the college. More meetings are held at which elementary, high school, and college teachers come together to discuss common problems and to seek an understanding of the problems peculiar to each level of instruction. The Curriculum Commission has shown how successfully this can operate on a national scale and on a smaller scale in its vertical subject committees. Such vertical representation is to be found in many communities studying curriculum revision, methodology, and evaluation and similar professional problems.

3. Greater individualization of instruction. Despite the criticism of certain observers who have really *not* observed or not observed sufficiently, many of our colleagues have paid attention to the needs of our gifted students for decades. In my own high school days (1920-1924) there were classes for the gifted in English, and we were by no means the pioneers. Our professional journals have many examples of programs developed for the gifted in English; and were these practices publicized as widely as some of the isolated criticisms based on inadequate data, many would be amazed at the fine work that has been done for at least the past three decades. It is

hoped that future publications of the Committee to Inform the Public will enable our colleagues to tell this story better than it has been told.

Likewise, much has been done with the slow-learning child in English. It seems that what our colleagues need are compilations of successful practices with both the gifted and the slow-learners, similar to the kit *They Will Read Literature*. These would have the double function of informing the lay public of our ways of meeting the needs of the exceptional child at both ends of the intellectual spectrum, and also assisting our newer colleagues who are meeting this problem daily.

Because of lack of space I shall list only some of the other signs of the dynamic quality of our profession as it can be observed daily in the classrooms across the land:

4. Great utilization of medium of television and other audiovisual aids.

5. Closer relationship between teacher and supervisor for improvement of instruction.

6. Greater utilization of extra-classroom experiences, to enrich the students' background. From the trip to the local newspaper plant in the junior high school to the trip abroad in the junior year in college, there is a close kinship as regards enriching the background for English teaching and learning.

7. Deeper understanding of the nature of the child as it affects his learning of English.

8. Greater attendance at summer workshops, regional workshops, annual national meetings, and local conferences.

9. Formation of more affiliates of the NCTE and of local associations of English teachers for study of common problems and their solutions.

10. Despite all the recent turmoil aroused by sputnik and the request for greater attention to science and mathematics, we hear voices from President Eisenhower down that America needs its Emersons as well as its Einsteins and Edisons. *Le plus ce change, le plus la même chose*. The more the cry is raised for science education, the more the cry is raised for greater attention to the humanities by those who know the importance of both in our democratic society dedicated to leadership in a free world.

1958 NCTE-SPONSORED WORKSHOPS

Here is preliminary information about eleven workshops to be co-sponsored in the summer of 1958 by the National Council of Teachers of English. One or two other workshops may still be added. Information about any in which you are interested may be obtained by writing to the director who is named below.

California. At Stanford University, July 14-18. Also co-sponsored by the California Association of English Councils. Theme: Developing Curricula for the English Language Arts. Director: Alfred Grommon.

Illinois. At University of Illinois, June 23-July 18. Theme: Teaching English in High Schools. Guest leaders: Dwight Burton (emphasizing literature), John R. Searles (emphasizing linguistics). Director: J. N. Hook.

Indiana. Two workshops at Purdue. English Language Workshop, June 16-July 4. Director: Russell Cosper. Developmental Reading for Teachers, July 7-25. Director: George Schick.

Iowa. At State University of Iowa (Iowa City), June 18-July 1. Two sequences: The Major Literary Genres, and The Teaching and Acting of Shakespeare. Guest Leader: Dwight Burton. Director: John C. Gerber.

Massachusetts. At Boston University, June 30-July 12. Emphasis on individual differences in reading, writing, speaking,

listening. Director: M. Agnella Gunn.

Minnesota. At St. Cloud State College, June 9-July 18. Shakespeare Workshop, for graduates and undergraduates. Reading the plays, Shakespeare's language, Shakespearean criticism, staging, and Elizabethan music, dances, etc. Director: T. A. Barnhart; co-directors: Marvin Thompson, Arthur Housman.

New York. At Hunter College, July 8-20. Workshop on Common Learnings in English and the Social Studies. Also co-sponsored by NCSS. Director: Marjorie B. Smiley.

At Geneseo, New York State University Teachers College. Also co-sponsored by New York State English Council. Details not yet available. Director: Hans Gottschalk.

Texas. At Midwestern University (Wichita Falls), June 10-27. Topic: The Use of Structural Linguistics in the Classroom. Guest leaders: Sumner Ives, Priscilla Tyler. Director: Madge Davis.

At North Texas State College (Denton), July 14-August 1. Topic: Constructive Teaching of Grammar and New Linguistic Concepts. Director: E. G. Ballard.

Wisconsin. At U. of Wisconsin, June 30-July 25. Topics: Composition Writing and Grading, Basic Principles of Criticism. Leaders: Ednah Thomas, Henry Pochmann. Director: John R. Searles.

FORD FOUNDATION GRANT

The Ford Foundation has granted \$25,000 to the NCTE, the Modern Language Association, the College English Association, and the American Studies Association for a study to be called The Cooperative English Program.

The purpose of the study is to define the basic issues in the English teaching profession and to look toward ways of resolving those issues in the best interests

of American young people.

A small group of selected representatives of the four organizations met in New York in January, and additional meetings are scheduled for April and June.

Professor James Work, chairman at Indiana, is the chief representative from the NCTE's Commission on the English Curriculum.

News and Ideas

SPECIALISTS IN AMERICAN STUDIES will be interested in a recent pamphlet describing proceedings of the Conference on Materials for Research in American Culture. This conference, sponsored jointly by the Department of English and the Library, was held at the University of Texas in 1956. Chief concern was with problems of establishing manuscript collections of American authors. Perhaps the most interesting discussion was that of David Randall (Indiana), who devoted his time to what he called "Overlooked and Little Used Manuscript Sources." One such source is that of the dedicatee, who often gets the manuscript of the book in which he is honored. Other good sources are publishers', agents', and editors' files. Who owns the material in such files appears to be a major problem.

JOHN DONNE WAS WELL ACQUAINTED with alchemy and with the Hermetic philosophy from which it sprang, according to John Mazzeo (Cornell) in *Isis* (June 1957). Indeed, some poems, "A Nocturnall upon St. Lucies Day," for example, are virtually incomprehensible without a knowledge of alchemical theory. The theories of Paracelsus in particular "captivated his imagination," for Donne placed Paracelsus on the same level as Copernicus. Mazzeo lists some of the alchemical elements in Donne's work: microcosm-macrocosm analogy, astrology, generation of gold from baser metals, belief in Balsanum suum (natural balm), and others. Laboratory instruments—limbeck and prism—and Hermetic symbols—dragon, serpent, eagle, dove, phoenix—all are used in such a way, according to Mazzeo, that there is no doubt of Donne's thorough knowledge of the system.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE WORLD OF Books in the *Unesco Courier* (Feb. 1957) contains some of the most interesting facts about books in many a day. There are articles on the migration of literary works from one part of the world to another (e.g., the *Panchatantra*); preservation of ancient

books and manuscripts; world book production by countries and types (sixty countries now publish 5000 million books yearly; most books in 1955: USSR, Japan, U.K., West Germany, U.S.A.); effect of TV on reading (undetermined); impact of paperbacks; distribution of books (Austria has one bookstore for every 2745 persons, Denmark, one for 4000; Russia, in eighth place, has one for 8708, and the U.S., in fifteenth place, one for 18,616). Most interesting, and still pertinent although the figures are only up to 1955, are the articles on translation. Among other facts we learn that from 1948 to 1955 Lenin was the most frequently translated author (968 editions); the Bible is a not very close second (887); and after that come Stalin (689), Tolstoy (495), Gorki (489), Dickens (443), Verne (432), Shakespeare and Balzac (424 each). First American representative is Jack London in 14th place (347); Pearl Buck is 17th (304) and Mark Twain 18th (303). Other Americans on this list of one hundred most widely translated authors are Earl Stanley Gardner (261), Cooper (210), Zane Grey (194), Steinbeck (172), Howard Fast (163), Hemingway (157), Bromfield (145), Edgar Rice Burroughs (145), Louisa May Alcott (144), Poe (142), Vicki Baum (137), Walt Disney (134), Ellery Queen (126), Max Brand (122), Leslie Charteris (116), Erskine Caldwell (108), John Dickson Carr (106), Upton Sinclair (106), and Melville (105). A breakdown by specific countries for 1955 alone does not change the picture much, for the only American writers consistently among the most frequently translated in a given country are the detective story writers, the left-wingers (Dreiser, London, Fast, occasionally Sinclair), and, much farther down the list, Mark Twain and Cooper. Translated in the most different countries in 1955 were Tolstoy (23), Shakespeare and Hans Christian Andersen (22), Gorki, Chekhov, Balzac, and London (19), Dostoevski, Turgenev, Dickens, and Dumas pere (18), Pearl Buck (17), and Verne, Mark Twain, Maupassant, Plato, Hugo, Zola, Maugham, and Daphne Du Maurier

(16). In the same year authors with most different titles translated are approximately the same: Tolstoy (105), Gorki (102), Verne (92), etc. Quantitatively Russia is the greatest user of books in translation: from 1918 to 1954, 77 million copies of French authors in translation were published in the USSR; during the same time there were 50 million from the U.S., 38 million from the U.K., and 36 million from Germany. Obviously books are big business throughout the world, and translations are an essential part of that big business.

INTRO BULLETIN, POSSIBLY THE only "literary newspaper of the arts," features news about the Mecca Flats (Nevada) writers' and artists' colony in its June 1957 issue, as well as news of radio drama, Robert Graves, and last spring's ceremony at the American Academy and National Institute of Arts and Letters. *Intro* is 10c an issue; write Box 860, Grand Central Station, N.Y. 17.

THE LITERARY ASPECTS OF *AMERICAN Heritage* for Dec. 1957 are: for teachers of seventeenth-century American literature, an article on Apostle Eliot; for Victorians on both sides of the Atlantic, an account of New York's Boz Ball to welcome Dickens, by Ada Nisbet (UCLA); reminiscence of "An Iowa Christmas," reminiscent of Dylan Thomas's Wales memory, by Paul Engle (S.U. Iowa); for readers of Edith Wharton or Richard Harding Davis, an album of Gibson Girl pictures.

ANOTHER NEW PROFESSIONAL journal issues from Minnesota (Box 4050, University Station): *The Graduate Student of English* is a quarterly (\$1 a year) printing article on "the ideals and realpolitik" of the subject, on "new strategies and exercises for teaching," on critical topics, bibliographies, and reviews of magazine items.

THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT AT Northwestern continues its "Guide to Ezra Pound's *Cantos*" in *The Analyst*, number XIII, with a gloss of *Canto XI* by Robert

Mayo, general editor of the series. Some like Pound's work, some do not; others don't understand it. *The Analyst*, cheap at 10c a copy, is a good way to remedy this latter difficulty.

STRUCTURAL LINGUISTICS AND Introductory literature courses are the chief subjects of talks by Harold Whitehall (Indiana), Norman Stageberg (Iowa S.T.C.), and others printed in the *Yearbook* of the Iowa Council of Teachers of English. Copies are 90c from 32 OAT, S.U. Iowa, Iowa City.

ANOTHER STATE LITERARY MAP, this one issued by the Missouri Association of Teachers of English, is available for a dollar from Robert J. Greef, Central Missouri State College, Warrensburg, Missouri. Ben W. Fuson (Park) and Greef are the editors. The map includes 33 vignettes of Missouri writers, 67 other captions, and a box of 100 less well-known authors.

THE ANONYMOUS SEVENTEENTH-century biographer of Milton is without doubt Milton's friend Cyriack Skinner, William Riley Parker (Indiana) states in a letter to *TLS* (13 Sept. 1957). But R. H. Hunt, Keeper of Western Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library, writes to *TLS* (10 Oct.) that he has examined the same evidence—the handwriting of a letter by Skinner, which Parker feels is the same as that of the anonymous biography—and he thinks that Professor Parker is more certain than the evidence gives him any right to be.

TLS ITSELF IS REVIEWED BY F. W. Bateson in the October *Essays in Criticism*. Bateson's discussion centers on *TLS*'s custom of reviewing anonymously. Bateson discusses the origins of the practice, explains the reasons for its continuance, and thoroughly condemns it as misleading and unfair. Otherwise, he finds the reviews in *TLS* excellent—the level of scholarship is high and the writing itself is usually excellent—but the value to the reader would be greater if he knew who was doing the writing.

New Books

Fiction

KING OF THE MOUNTAIN, George Garrett (Scribners, 1957, 184 pp., \$3.50). Fifteen lively short stories by Garrett of Wesleyan, poet (one book, periodicals including *CE*), critic, and now fictioneer. The conflicts in these tales are often between husbands and wives, fathers and sons, with some reminiscence of the early Hemingway, but the emotion and the diction and the humor brought to the conflict by the writer are deeper and broader than Hemingway's. Other stories crystalize and dramatize the feelings of youth in Greenwich Village and in the Army of Occupation, with absolutely no sentimentality or condescension. Like all good short stories, these constantly present the reader with the unexpected but do not leave him there gaping. For the record, one might pick "The Rivals," "The King of the Mountain," and "What's the Purpose of the Bayonet" as the tales most likely to turn up in college anthologies of the future.

Recordings

TWENTIETH CENTURY POETRY IN ENGLISH, read by the authors (Library of Congress, 1954, L1, 5, 7, 11, 12, 12-in. LP, \$4.50 each). On these records, taken from older 78's, the engineering is very good, and one can only be persuaded or not by the reading of the individual poet. The following are good and clear: Katherine Chapin, Mark Van Doren, Cummings, Shapiro, Lowell, Winters (it's not hard to be clear with almost completely end-stopped verse), and MacLeish, sounding as if he were still twenty years old. Others are a little too light—Eberhart (dramatic only on "Groundhog"), Janet Lewis, Leonie Adams, Muriel Rukeyser (it's hard to tell the women apart), and Jarrell (who is much moved as he reads), and others are too heavy—Howard Baker (not so bad) and Jeffers (pretty mushy). Empson, Theodore Spencer, and Aiken sound quite British, without achieving the curious broad flatness of the Old Master, W. H. Auden. The most individual

voice is the precisely mocking one of John Crowe Ransom.

Scholarly Texts

THE VARIORUM EDITION OF THE POEMS OF W. B. YEATS, ed. Peter Allt and Russell K. Alspach (Macmillan, 1957, 884 pp., \$18.50). At long last, the edition of the greatest poems of the century presented with all their complex and significant variations by the poet over the years. The late Professor Allt (Trinity, Dublin) and Col. Alspach (West Point), using the Definitive Edition of 1949 as standard, have recorded every word and piece of punctuation in the multitude of other printings, and have added poems not included in the 1949 edition, Yeats's own notes and prefaces, and all the apparatus that a Yeats scholar could wish for. This is a great achievement, one that will provide a model for the other great poetic *corpora* of the twentieth century as yet uncollated.

Reference

A DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN-ENGLISH USAGE, Margaret Nicholson (Oxford, 1957, 671 pp., \$5). Fowler's *Dictionary of Modern English* has needed up-dating since its publication in 1926, and Miss Nicholson's simplification and modernization of this familiar classic is an improvement. If we are to judge this revision by modern standards, however, she does little to improve on her predecessor's rather capricious coverage and lack of scientific method. For instance, a diacritical system is inadequate for indicating the schwa and glide vowels in *acumen*, and we are given no pronunciation at all in such questionable cases as *suite* and *raze*. In spite of Miss Nicholson's new title, she is not entirely familiar with the phonological and lexical features of American English. The back formation *enthuse*, the reduplication *hari-kari*, and the derivative *malapropism* are more common in this country than she would allow. Indeed, recent American diction-

aries are better guides to the latest meanings of many words such as *sad* (deplorably bad) and *flair* (knack). Some of the general articles in *AEU* (cf. *semantics*, *inversion*, *redundancy*) could also be improved through a knowledge of recent developments in linguistics and communication theory. All of which is to say that we still await a more scientific treatment of usage such as is promised in the forthcoming *NCTE Dictionary of Current English Usage*.

R. C. SIMONINI, JR.

LONGWOOD COLLEGE

Translations

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF MONTAIGNE: ESSAYS, TRAVEL JOURNAL, LETTERS, trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford, 1957, 1094 pp., \$12.50). A wonderful new rendition and collection by Frame of Columbia, the result of fifteen years' labor and insight. Cotton was fine, but this generation can learn more from Montaigne's candor when Frame translates it "not a month ago I was caught ignorant that leaven was used to make bread, and what was meant by fermenting wine" than when we must puzzle at Cotton's "'tis not above a month ago, that I was trapped in my ignorance of the use of leaven to make bread, or to what end it was to keep wine in the vat" ("Of Presumption": Bk. II, Ch. XVII). With helpful footnotes.

THE ODYSSEY OF HOMER, trans. T. E. Shaw (Oxford, 1956, 327 pp., \$1.50, paper). Colonel Lawrence's *Odyssey*, first published in 1935, is now reprinted as a paperback from the original plates. This and Rieu's immensely popular version are the best available introductions to the *Odyssey* for the general reader, but they both inevitably fail to render the intensity and pace one finds in Chapman or Pope at their best. Rieu's language is unassuming and sometimes flat, while Lawrence tends to be stilted without being dignified: "You were not anciently such a fool, O Etoneus, son of Boethus! But herein you babble like a fond child, forgetting how many times we two have eaten hospitably in other men's houses on our way back to this palace, where may Zeus for ever grant us surcease

from pain!" Rieu's colloquialisms do less violence to Homer.

GEORGE DEFOREST LORD

YALE UNIVERSITY

Anthologies and Texts

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS, intro. Maxwell Geismar (Pocket Library, 1957, 319 pp., 35¢, paper). Attractive cover design, readable print, maps, suggestive introduction, and brief bibliographical note, make this reprint entirely adequate for popular use, perhaps even adequate for some college survey, comparative literature, or humanities courses. But for serious use (specialized courses in the Eighteenth Century or in Swift) it will hardly suffice. The text, which is not identified, is apparently that of Faulkner (1735) freely, silently adapted. There are no notes, and the Introduction, though skillfully packing much in little, is erroneous in one particular (declaring that Vanessa dismissed Swift, instead of the other way around) and is overly slanted toward psychoanalytic interpretation.

JOHN M. ADEN

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

THE PELICAN BOOK OF ENGLISH PROSE, Gen. Ed. Kenneth Allott. Vol. I: ELIZABETHAN AND JACOBAN PROSE, ed. Kenneth Muir (276 pp.); II: SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PROSE, ed. Peter Ure (284 pp.); III: EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY PROSE, ed. D. W. Jefferson (288 pp.); IV: PROSE OF THE ROMANTIC PERIOD, ed. Raymond Wright (288 pp.); V: VICTORIAN PROSE, eds. Kenneth and Miriam Allott (314 pp.). (Pelican Originals, 85¢, paper). This anthology of English prose from 1550 to 1880 assembles many pieces hitherto not anthologized and indeed sometimes not republished. It proceeds on an unusual principle: assembling many short selections on the basis of interest of subject matter and from a broad variety of writers—literary and sub-literary, public and private—instead of assembling selections from the self-conscious, elevated prose of the masters only. One would turn to this anthology, privately or in the classroom, to answer such questions as the following: What is

the history of English prose style? What are the different prose styles? Where do they take their origin, and in what periods do they flourish? What is the relation of style to historical circumstance? Is there in English, as Dr. Johnson believed, "a style which never becomes obsolete, a certain mode of phraseology so consonant and congenial to the analogy and principles of its respective language as to remain settled and unaltered"? The anthology would not serve to answer questions about the qualities of great prose, about style in a larger sense than that of diction and syntax, about, that is, the total conduct and management of a piece (because the passages are short fragments), or about the continuity of English prose from the beginnings (because, being for the general reader, the anthology begins where the English language is commonly understood). There is no doubt that this is a valuable collection. The introductions are on the whole excellent and full, and together form a partial history of English prose style. The selections are unusual and judiciously chosen; and, justifying themselves in the most important way of all, they are extremely interesting. Finally, the grouping of different passages around single topics is often unexpected and even exciting.

JOHN C. WESTON, JR.

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

THE TRAGEDY OF OTHELLO, ed. Louis B. Wright and Virginia L. Freund (Pocket Books, 1957, 129 pp., 35¢, paper). Second in the Folger Library General Reader's Shakespeare, *Othello* is printed with the text on the right-hand page, and with notes and hard words on the left. Space is also provided for additional notes by the reader. The significance of *Othello* as Shakespeare's most perfectly designed play and the fascination of a criminal like Iago for Elizabethan audiences, who looked on Italy as the breeding ground for consummate villains of the Machiavellian school, are two of the subjects discussed in the thirty pages of commentary. Twenty-four contemporary illustrations and woodcuts also help to enrich the text.

CHARLES NORTON COE

UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO

WORLD LITERATURE, Joseph Remenyi et al. (Pittsburgh, 1957, 315 pp., \$5). "This book is second in a series sponsored by the Committees for the Nationality Rooms in the Cathedral of Learning," and consists of a series of seventeen lectures on a bewildering variety of subjects. Despite the title, a common denominator might have been possible, but there is none. Some of the lectures give us a panorama of an entire literature (Kirkconnel on "The Tapestry of Hungarian Literature," Princess Ileana on "Outline of Romanian Literature"); some are on individual authors (Hung on Tu Fu, Nemecek on Capek, Carpenter on "The Genius of Homer," Snyder on Burns); some are on movements (Peyre on "Contemporary France," Larsen on "The Folktale and the Revival of Norwegian Nationalism," Benson on Swedish Literature; some are on influences (Hitti on "Arab Literary Contributions to Western Thought," Jockers on "Goethe and We"); some are on a group of writers (Singleton on "Italian Literature: Three Masters, Three Epochs," Karpovich on Tolstoy and Dostoevsky). As in many such books, there is also no consonancy of level and tone in it: one speaker is elaborately autobiographical, another impersonal; one speaks to scholars, another to the layman. Nevertheless, we must be grateful for any information on such unfamiliar literatures as the Lithuanian (Senn), the Yugoslav (Raditsa), the Hungarian, or the Romanian. Certain of the pieces stand out for excellence: Remenyi ("The Meaning of World Literature") is a man of nobly philosophic perspectives; Carpenter speaks of Homer with infectious enthusiasm; Princess Ileana is utterly charming and touching; Peyre is a beautiful combination of learning and urbanity. Perhaps if we think of this as a collection of totally unrelated sallies into literature, rather than as a book, we shall find it vastly rewarding.

BERNARD D. N. GREBANIER

BROOKLYN COLLEGE

JUDE THE OBSCURE, Thomas Hardy, ed. Carl J. Weber (Harper's Modern Classics, 1957, 494 pp., \$1.25, paper). Weber (Colby), a perceptive and thorough Hardy scholar, reminds us that the "climate of

opinion" has changed since *Jude* appeared in 1895. His comments on the controversy aroused at that time recall the words of one angry lady-reviewer mentioned by Florence Emily Hardy: "When I finished the story I opened the windows and let in the fresh air, and I turned to my bookshelves and I said: 'Thank God for Kipling and Stevenson, Barrie and Mrs. Humphry Ward.'" But still timely is Hardy's own statement: "Tragedy may be created by an opposing environment either of things inherent in the universe, or of human institutions. If the former be the means exhibited and deplored, the writer is regarded as impious; if the latter, as subversive and dangerous; when all the while he may never have questioned the necessity or urged the non-necessity of either."

JAMES R. BAKER

SAN DIEGO STATE COLLEGE

THE RISE OF SILAS LAPHAM, William Dean Howells (Houghton Mifflin, 1957, 299 pp., 85¢, paper). Another text in the Riverside Editions, this carries the usual competent introduction, this time by Howells's biographer and critic, Edwin H. Cady (Syracuse).

WORLD MASTERPIECES, ed. Maynard Mack, Bernard M. W. Knox, John C. McGalliard, P. M. Pasnetti, Howard E. Hugo, René Wellek, Kenneth Douglas (Norton, 1956, Vol. I, 1143 pp.; Vol. II, 1264 pp.; \$5.50 vol.). It is hard to feel excited over another "world literature" anthology, but Professor Mack (Yale) and his associates have done an exemplary job of putting together a standard collection of the literature of Western civilization organized chronologically by the customary periods. It would be a finical taste indeed that quarrelled with the inclusions or exclusions. The expected items are all here—e.g., *Oedipus*, *Hamlet*, *Phaedra*, *Candide*, *Faust* I, "A Simple Heart," sizeable chunks of *The Iliad*, *The Aeneid*, *The Divine Comedy*, *Don Quixote*, etc. Some of the unexpected inclusions are quite welcome—e.g., delightful excerpts from *The Praise of Folly*, Act V of *Faust* II, etc. The editors have happily used fine modern translations wherever they could instead of reduplicating the same old

copyright-free nineteenth-century barriers to understanding that pass for translations in too many anthologies. The editorial commentary is minimal but helpful—if the student will bother to go back to the introduction to the period where the commentary relevant to each selection is printed. Textual notes, printed at the bottom of the page, are likewise minimal, designed primarily to explain obscure words or allusions. If these volumes had the clean typography and generous margins of some of the competing anthologies one might be able to generate enough excitement to argue that this edition is not merely a competent standard anthology, but rather *the* standard anthology for world literature or master-piece courses.

DAVID H. MALONE

ALABAMA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE AND OTHER STORIES, Stephen Crane, ed. Daniel G. Hoffman (Harper's Modern Classics, 1957, 189 pp., \$1.15). The text is probably all right, but the introduction and the "other stories" are pretty wrong. With the exception of the wonderful "The Veteran," the "other stories" consist of only twenty pages of only two pieces of fiction and two editorial casuals. The introduction (by Hoffman of Swarthmore) is off on the religious kick *du côté de chez* Stallman that insists on a theme of "the ethic of redemption" rather than deterministic maturation in *The Red Badge*. Where the evidence used to depend chiefly on the coincidence that Jim Conklin has Christ's initials, Hoffman adds the curious suggestion that because a rejected passage in the MS. had Henry's mother giving him a Bible, she is to be credited with a "humble preaching of the Gospel's wisdom" and is comparable to Father Mapple in *Moby-Dick*! But don't stop there: Crane wrote a bit on Ouida's *Under Two Flags* in which he used the word *gospel*, and he once mentioned the Civil War soldier as *The boy in blue* and we know that blue is the color of *Heaven*. Furthermore, because Crane's soldier is concerned with death, Crane belongs to a club with Edwards, Freneau, Poe, Melville, Twain, Dickinson, and Whitman (from which, apparently, Brown, Bryant, Hawthorne, and Stowe are excluded) that

possesses "the common background of Calvinism in American literary culture." There are also patent errors corrected as follows: (p. vii) one could of course know from the writing of Walt Whitman that there had been a Civil War, and (p. x) the best guess is that Cooper was trying to better Jane Austen in his first novel. *Footnote:* To critics who like to begin with initials and find religious symbolism and thematic emphasis in a writer's occasional use of metaphors drawn from religious experience, one offers the thousands of pages of unexplicated fiction in which the following Christ-figures occur—Rolland's Jean Christophe, Balzac's Jacques Collin, Scott's Jedediah Cleishbotham, Dicken's Jonas Chuzzlewit, and Faulkner's Jason Compson. When these are exhausted, there is the reverse, or ironical, twist of Casey Jones, Calamity Jane, and Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines (plainly, Jesus Christ of the Messianic Hope).

THE PORTABLE MATTHEW ARNOLD, ed. Lionel Trilling (Viking, 1956, 659 pp., \$1.25, paper). First published in 1949 and issued now as a paperback volume, this selection of poems, essays, and letters illustrates Arnold's diversity of interests and styles as well as his peculiar relevance to modern life. (The editor wisely omits, however, the rather fuzzy writings on religion.) And, while Arnold's diversity is represented in the selections, Professor Trilling's very helpful introduction is largely concerned with showing the coherence of Arnold's purpose, his consistent devotion to the humanistic ideals of personal and social wholeness and continuity. With the introduction, as well as a chronology and notes (including some of Lowry's notes to the Arnold-Clough correspondence), this is a useful volume for both the general reader and the scholar.

W. STACY JOHNSON

SMITH COLLEGE

THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD, Oliver Goldsmith (Pocket Library, 1956, 205 pp., 35¢, paper). Brennecke of Columbia is the latest in a long line of capable critics to try to isolate the special quality which causes *The Vicar* to persist as one of our permanent and popular cultural treasures. It has

"an hundred faults," as Goldsmith himself confessed; yet it has been read widely and with pleasure for two hundred years. Professor Brennecke characterizes the novel as "angelical," "charming," and as possessing "God's plenty of levels of meaning," but he ends in effect by throwing his hands in the air, as we must all do in assessing a work of such tenuous but undeniable appeal. It is possible that for this age, at least, the things which have always caused trouble in the book—i.e., coincidence, stock characterization, etc.—contribute to rather than detract from its excellence. For the world we see here is a comfortably closed one, whose rules and laws are well-established. Dr. Primrose, a father figure whose sternness is softened by gullibility and mildness, moves through a series of trials until he arrives, well-adjusted, at a happy ending, a fit conclusion to what is, in effect, an Anglican idyll. A handy reprint, pleasing in format and typography.

CHARLES WEIS

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON: SELECTED POETRY, ed. Herbert Marshall McLuhan (Rinehart, 1956, 394 pp., 75¢, paper). The selection is all right, with a complete *Maud* and *In Memoriam* and the right *Idylls* ("The Coming of Arthur" and "The Last Tournament"), though there is still some early and middle Tennyson that can go. McLuhan's introduction, with wonted opaqueness, presents the poet (as he says) as neither Victoria's Polonius, Eliot's morbid sensiblerian, nor Auden's English Baudelaire, but rather as one of a line of Western poets practicing in (1) the picturesque and (2) the epyllion, or little epic.

SELECTIONS FROM RALPH WALDO EMERSON, ed. Stephen E. Whicher (Houghton Mifflin, 1957, 517 pp., \$1.15, paper). Reflecting the latest and best scholarship, this book offers historical perspective, provides an index of themes and subjects valuable to student and specialist alike, and, by a skillful intermingling of masterpieces and journal extracts, illustrates the evolution of Emerson's thought and art. Though unusually rich in bibliographies and appendices, it is an amazingly manageable volume. For the first time in an an-

thology, Emerson's poetry is given background and adequate notes. In his introduction, Whicher (Cornell), distinguishes between Emerson's value for his own day and his significance for ours, hinting, at the same time, at his stature in a future climate of opinion. The format is excellent.

KENNETH WALTER CAMERON
TRINITY COLLEGE

POETRY IN OUR TIME, Babette Deutsch (Columbia, 1956, 400 pp., \$5). For the general reader and beginning student of contemporary poetry, i.e., (Hardy's to the present), this study is an excellent introduction, presenting a stimulating and informed interpretation of poetry in its historical, social, and critical perspectives. Her roles as a teacher (Columbia) and poet guide Babette Deutsch in sensitive and judicious insights into what her fellow poets are attempting. Following no one critical approach, she employs a variety of techniques to open the poem to the perceiving mind. This second printing brings the book up to date with a change of publishers and an eight-page introduction.

LOUIS LEITER
BROWN UNIVERSITY

Literary History and Criticism

STILL REBELS, STILL YANKEES, Donald Davidson (Louisiana, 284 pp., \$4.50). This book is a collection of Mr. Davidson's essays, papers, and addresses over a period of twenty years or more, on a variety of literary topics and figures, including Yeats, Hardy, Toynbee, John Gould Fletcher, and Stark Young. The primary thesis is perhaps best indicated by a title, "Why the Modern South Has a Great Literature"; or it may more precisely be by a sentence in "Regionalism and Nationalism in American Literature": "Regionalism is not an end in itself, not a literary affectation, not an aesthetic credo, but a condition of literary realization." Mr. Davidson (Vanderbilt) labors throughout to constate the Southern Agrarian traditionalism to which he has consistently remained faithful, by the unique mixture of esthetic criticism and

social and economic theory which has become the hallmark of his now somewhat scattered group. In general he is lucid, graceful, and vigorous, though in a few instances his vigor lapses into violence.

RICHARD HARTER FOGLE
TULANE UNIVERSITY

THE POETIC PATTERN, Robin Skelton (California, 1956, 228 pp., \$3.75). Professor Skelton (Manchester) has written a bold and very earnest book which he would like "considered rather as a Prolegomena than as a Complete Study" of the nature of poetry. He examines the origins of verse—nodding to magic, religion, and Jung—and the psychology of creation—attending to evidences of the unconscious mind. This book will be welcomed by those persons who are fatigued by that esthetic which separates the poem from the individuality of the poet, and by those persons uninterested in formal analysis. Some may think its scope so great and its text so brief that important distinctions are hastily passed over.

ROBERT E. KNOLL
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

ANGLO-GERMAN AND AMERICAN-GERMAN CROSSCURRENTS, VOL. I, ed. Philip Allison Shelley et al., (North Carolina, 1957, xvi+ 303 pp., \$7). In the introduction the chief editor validates the Penn State project on Anglo-German and American-German literary and cultural relations as an offshoot of the Wisconsin-Hohlfeld project of similar name. The collection of essays begins with a discussion of French intermediaries, 1750-1815, by R. C. Charles and ends with one on the American reception of the Goethean doctrine of self-culture by the chief editor. Between the two are essays on the enthusiasm of several English, American, and Irish authors of note for German literature and what it led to: Mangan by Erin McKiernan, Meredith and Howells by William W. Betts, Jr., Simms by J. Wesley Thomas, and Lanier by Arthur O. Lewis, Jr. The essays are so similar in their business-like method and style as to seem to have been written by a single hand. The phrase "Crosscurrents, Volume I" is misleading, for the flow is all in one direction, namely

away from Germany, and the second volume (see p. xv) is to be oriented likewise.

L. M. PRICE

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

ENGLISH SENTIMENTAL DRAMA, Arthur Sherbo (Michigan State, 1957, 181 pp., \$4.50). "Sentimental" as a critical term is often loosely used, says Professor Sherbo of Michigan State University. After demonstrating the inadequacy of previous criteria for admission to the limbo of the sentimental, he examines plays written over a two-century span in an attempt to isolate as precisely as possible the elements responsible for eliciting the sentimental response. He finds the heart of sentimentalism in technique, rather than in content. For example, reforming rakes are plentiful in dramatic literature between 1600 and 1800. But four lines of rather grudging promise to do better in the future make only a convention for ending a play handily; to reduce the audience to soggy happiness, the penitent must go down on his knees before his lady, a direct descendent of Patient Griselda, and spend four pages in self-flagellation. Thus, "exploitation of sentimental possibilities by repeated and prolonged emphasis" is the chief characteristic of sentimental drama. Closely allied to "repetition and prolongation" are "emphasis and direction," which, properly manipulated, will help drive the audience to its handkerchief. Another important characteristic is "eschewal of humor and the bawdy," enemies both to sentimentalism. The final chapter is devoted to the thesis that, while very popular in the years after 1775, sentimental drama certainly did not "triumph" sufficiently to drive non-sentimental plays from the stage (as Bernbaum, among others, has held). Professor Sherbo's bibliography, though only selective, should be very useful. In his preface, the author says his greatest obligation is to Alfred Harbage; readers will regret that the indebtedness does not include prose style.

FRANK S. HOOK

LEHIGH UNIVERSITY

ANATOMY OF CRITICISM, Northrop Frye (Princeton, 1957, 383 pp., \$6). Perhaps it is fair to say that Frye (Toronto) has written a sort of *Novum Organum* of

criticism. He begins with a lucid and devastatingly amusing description of the poor state of literary critics, who do not even have "real standards to distinguish a verbal structure that is literary from one that is not, and no idea what to do with the vast penumbra of books that may be claimed for literature because they are written with 'style,' or are useful as 'background,' or have simply got into a university course of 'great books.'" It follows that we cannot name the various kinds of works of literary art: the theory of genres is "stuck precisely where Aristotle left it," and what we call generic studies are really only classifications of material content or subject matter. The cause of all this, Frye suggests, is that literary critics still see "literature as a huge aggregate or miscellaneous pile of discrete 'works,' and criticism as a more or less taxonomic enterprise." In other words, the critics are taking for their data just the "phenomena they are supposed to interpret." Books are, as it were, "the immediate sensations of experience," like heat, cold, moistness, dryness in medieval physics; and what the critics need to do is to invent or discover concepts that will allow the art-ness or literature-ness of books to be discussed. "It is clear that criticism cannot be a systematic study unless there is a quality in literature which enables it to be so. We have to adopt the hypothesis, then, that just as there is an order of nature behind the natural sciences, so literature is not a piled aggregate of 'works,' but an order of words" (pp. 13, 16-17). I should add that one of Frye's motives seems to be to discover a new and sophisticated ground for ethical values in literature as a whole (though of course not in single works): "We tried to show . . . that the moment we go from the individual work of art to the sense of the total form of the art, the art becomes no longer an object of aesthetic contemplation but an ethical instrument participating in the work of civilization" (p. 348. Does "participating in the work of civilization" reflect Vivas's contention that art creates values?) In his critical and heuristic sections Frye is very good indeed. But I have to confess that I am somewhat troubled when he gets to analyzing the literary qual-

ity of literature. Since Frye himself introduced the breathtaking analogy between the assumptions of modern science and criticism, I have to ask (naively) what measurable entities does he suggest constitute the literary quality of literature. But what I find is that the central fact about literature is the existence of archetypes, symbols "which occur often enough in literature to be recognizable as an element of one's literary experience as a whole" ("Third Essay" and pp. 341-342, 365). I wonder just what relationship Frye, who is scholastically conscious of terminology, would develop between the "total form" of literature and "one's literary experience as a whole." But in any event it seems that these archetypes are only the kind of reductive generalities (literary: *miles gloriosus*, *senex iratus*; or pan-human: ability to recognize food [p. 118]) that at various times (including now, among critics oriented toward classical anthropology) have been supposed to fulfill the requirements of truth as expressed in the great canon of St. Vincent of Lérins.

WALLACE W. DOUGLAS
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

THE LOYALTIES OF ROBINSON JEFFERS, Radcliffe Squires, (Michigan, 1957, 202 pp., \$4.25). Aware of the critics' low estimation of Jeffers and of his vague place in the history of American Literature, Professor Squires (Michigan) feels justified in making an effort to discover Jeffers's world. He examines his possible affinities with Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Lawrence, Lucretius, and others, and attempts an analysis of his imperfect materialism. He does little, however, to win the reader to a reconsideration of the poetry, the weaknesses of which he is aware, but which he would willingly overlook because "of the greatness of the voice which exceeds mere idiom." Professor Squires wrongly attributes, I think, the reason for Jeffers's neglect to our "primarily timid" era. He does not convince me that Jeffers's vision is one to be heeded, nor that in spite of the rejection of the poet's vision, the poetry repays the reading. The book closes with a truism misapplied to Jeffers. I do not be-

lieve that when we read Jeffers we "look squarely at the universe."

JAMES G. SOUTHWORTH
UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO

CLASSICAL INFLUENCES ON ENGLISH PROSE, J. A. K. Thomson (Allen and Unwin, 1956, 303 pp., \$3.75). This book is not, in fact, about the influence of the classics on English prose; it is an introduction to Latin and Greek prose literature by types. Thomson (London), purposely excludes the Greek New Testament, but includes in his survey most other Latin and Greek works, not only ancient but medieval and Renaissance as well. His book is a most attractive introduction to these works; for each literary form in turn he gives his own facile translations of substantial sections of the popular passages of each work (e.g., Pliny's letter describing the eruption of Vesuvius) and provides a few urbane critical remarks of a sort designed to attract the reader to further exploration. At the end of many of the chapters he mentions a few English authors whose work resembles the classics described. For the student of English literature the book is thus bound to be vastly disappointing; at no point where one might be led by the title to hope for a considered illumination of important problems—such as the influence of Ciceronianism and Platonism—does Professor Thomson's approach provide what is expected. Taken for what it is, Professor Thomson's book is certainly a worthwhile piece of work; it is one of the last of its kind, an appreciation of the classics by a lover of classics of the old British school. It is good reading for undergraduates, but the serious student of English literature should not expect to find it a book on the subject announced in its title.

SEARS JAYNE
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

WILLIAM FAULKNER: AN INTERPRETATION, Irving Malin (Stanford, 1957, 99 pp., \$3). This is a short but very knowing book about what may be Faulkner's basic themes—rigidity and the father-son relationship—from the point of view of psychoanalysis but unclinically so. In the course of examining these themes, Malin

(Stanford) considers the relative place of women (there is not enough on Eula Varner, even in pre-*Town* terms), the technique of opposing characters, and the use of Old and New Testament narrative (not the last word on the subject). There are some errors of fact—"Henry [Sutpen] seduces Judith, his sister," for example, but the book is more than helpful to a student of Faulkner on any level. Except that there is no index.

AMERICANS ARE PEOPLE, Leland Miles (Twayne, 1956, 186 pp., \$3). This collection of informal essays might well be entitled, *College English Professors Are People*, for in his excursions into such diverse topics as Wordsworth, the Greentop Camp for Crippled Children, and the Rosenberg case, Dr. Miles (Hanover) is anything but the academician. The essays, according to Dr. Miles, are based largely on speeches prepared for a general audience, and whatever appeal they might have in their present form must be to that same group. The book contains a highly complimentary foreword by Theodore Roosevelt McKeldin, Governor of Maryland.

HARRIS W. WILSON

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

JOYCE AND AQUINAS, William T. Noon, S.J. (Yale, 1957, 167 pp., \$3.75). At the 1956 MLA meeting, the Catholic Renaissance Society devoted its annual session entirely to Joyce. Trying not to smile, I asked Father Noon (who had read one of the three papers) if Catholicism were in process of assimilating Joyce; trying not to smile, he said he thought it was. His book is a manifestation of the process; as such, it is a document of considerable importance in modern literary history; and in itself, regardless of the historical movement, it is a valuable study. For Father Noon (Canisius) is factual where Joyce was exuberant. Joyce made much of his Thomism, calling his esthetics "applied Aquinas." Father Noon makes much less of it. Joyce's knowledge of Aquinas, he says, was sketchy and unsystematic, and in applying it he distorted Aquinas's ideas—not because he misunderstood them but because he used them for his own purposes. Father Noon discusses

not only Joyce's esthetics but also his use of theology and myth and his transformation of language, relating them all to Aquinas sources and showing some of their analogues in such varied writers as Berkeley, Mallarmé, and Jung. Thus he advances our understanding of Joyce.

J. MITCHELL MORSE

PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

JOSEPH CONRAD: ACHIEVEMENT AND DECLINE, Thomas Moser (Harvard, 1957, 227 pp., \$3.50). The Conrad centennial year is the best of occasions for this study of "England's most complex novelist." We shall probably hear more on Conrad this year (1957), but I doubt whether we shall find saner criticism. Professor Moser (Stanford) asks two questions in his preface: Why did a writer of Conrad's calibre write so unevenly, and why is his later work so inferior to his earlier? He answers from what he modestly calls "one common reader's response to a chronological reading of Conrad's works." But Moser's response is anything but common. He distinguishes three major types of character and one minor in Conrad's work: the simple hero (MacWhirr), the vulnerable hero (Nostromo), the perceptive hero (Marlow), and the villain (Verloc). He discusses Conrad the moralist, the psychologist, the commentator on politics. And finally he turns with great respect to the major issue, Conrad the artist. Here his method is most effective. By moving from *Almayer's Folly* to *Suspense*, by devoting his longest chapter to Conrad's treatment of "love," by making a close reading of two drafts of *The Rescue* and a frank appraisal of *The Arrow of Gold*, he substantiates his argument that from *Chance* (1913) to *Suspense* (posthumous), Conrad's work shows a steady decline.

RICHARD M. LUDWIG

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

POE: A CRITICAL STUDY, Edward H. Davidson (Harvard, 1957, 290 pp., \$4.75). For a long time we have needed this book—"A philosophic inquiry into the mind and writings" of Poe—especially as its and their Coleridgean orientation, partly, relieve us of the necessity of sustaining an "Ameri-

can" Poe. Actually, Davidson (Illinois) has several deep and ranging approaches: the chapters on Poe's poetry, *Pym*, and *Eureka* are philosophical, but the chapter called "Death, Eros, and Horror" (attitudes towards them in nineteenth-century America) is sociological, "The Short Story as Grotesque" is esthetic, and "The Tale as Allegory" is psychological. The best section is the chapter on *Arthur Gordon Pym*, in which Davidson, following the lead of Patrick Quinn and W. T. Auden, meaningfully rescues that book from obscurity.

THE AMERICAN NOVEL AND ITS TRADITIONS, Richard Chase (Doubleday, 1957, 266 pp., 95¢, paper). This is not a handbook; it is an extended essay with a thesis. The thesis is that "the history of the American novel is not only the history of the rise of realism but also of the repeated rediscovery of the uses of romance. . . ." Chase (Columbia) thereby gives us a new emphasis that connects Brockden Brown, Cooper, Hawthorne, Melville, Twain, Norris, and Faulkner. Unfortunately for the whole, this means leaving out DeForest, Dreiser, and Hemingway and skimming over James and Howells as not quite fitting the thesis. As a writer, Chase is often a New Impressionist, but he is so lively and unorthodox and earnest that he carries the reader with him to the end.

VERSIONS OF MELODRAMA: A STUDY OF FICTION AND DRAMA OF HENRY JAMES, 1865-1897, Leo B. Levy (California, 1957, 126 pp., \$2.50, paper). A timely reminder by Mr. Levy (Louisiana) to those who see James as influenced not at all or only early by current popular melodrama that even in complexity he "typically reverts to simple, unformulated convictions that envisage a deadly opposition of moral extremes" and that this attitude can be seen persisting even in "the matured and considered works of his late years." But eventually the morality problem posed by his fiction (innocence *vs.* intrigue) no longer had to find melodramatic solution: Christopher Newman may posture melodramatically and Claire take the veil, but Maggie Verver, in "bringing the American sensibility into a living, significant

union with Europe," finally transcends melodrama."

EDWARD STONE

OHIO UNIVERSITY

STUDIES IN CLASSIC AMERICAN LITERATURE, D. H. Lawrence (Doubleday, Anchor Books, 1955, 191 pp., paper, 75¢). Lawrence's classic essay in impressionism is often overrated, but his reactions are sometimes *aperçus* and almost always pedagogically provocative, so that it is well to have the book available again.

THE TRAGIC VISION AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, ed. Nathan A. Scott, Jr. (Association, 157, 346 pp. \$4.50). Twelve essays by scholars in religion and the humanities on tragedy and religious views in Shakespeare, Milton, Pascal, Goethe, Dostoevsky, Hawthorne, Melville, Kafka, and Faulkner, plus a few philosophers. Three of the sections are by teachers of English: Battenhouse (Indiana), Stewart (Vanderbilt), and Waggoner (Brown).

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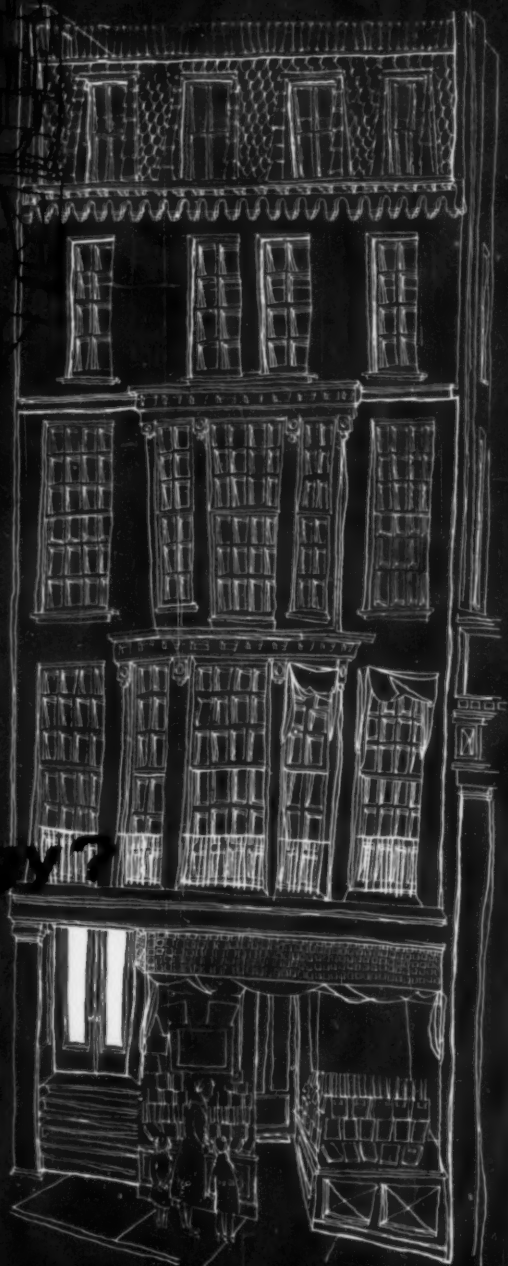
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